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MILTON

MEMORIAL LECTURES

1908

READ BEFORE THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

PERCY W. AMES

SECRETARY R.S.L.

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

EARLY in the year 1908 the Council of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom decided to commemorate the Tercentenary of the birth of John Milton by a series of popular lectures to be delivered in the autumn of that year by Fellows of the Society.

In publishing those lectures in the present volume the Council desires to express its thanks to the Fellows who responded to its invitation to deliver them; also to Dr. Williamson for his Notes on the Illustrations and for the loan of three portrait blocks, and to Professor Dowden for the likeness of Milton which forms the frontispiece.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction. By The Editor vii

Portraits of Milton. By George C. Williamson, Litt.D. 1

Milton's Knowledge of Music. By William Henry Hadow, M.A., Mus. Bac. 11

A Note on Milton's Shorter Poems. By Ernest Hartley Coleridge, M.A., Hon. F.R.S.L. . . 23

Milton and the Liberty of the Press. By William E. A. Axon, LL.D. 39

On the Conception and Treatment of Satan in 'Paradise Lost' and the 'Inferno.' By Edward Henry Pember, K.C., M.A. 59

Milton and the Grand Style. By Professor George E. B. Saintsbury, M.A., LL.D., D.Litt. . . . 83

Milton: his Religion and Polemics, Ecclesiastical as well as Theological. By The Rev. H. G. Rosedale, D.D. 109

Paradise Regained. By Professor Edward Dowden, D.C.L., Litt.D. 191

The Royal Society of Literature and the Study of Milton. By Sir Edward Brabrook, C.B. . 211

Milton in Hungary. By Professor Arminius Vambéry, Hon. F.R.S.L. 221

INTRODUCTION.

To celebrate in some way events and persons has been a custom in all times and among all communities. The most ancient religions contain exhortations to maintain festivals commemorative of heroes and victories and national deliverances, and it was no doubt felt from the first that commemorations serve not only to honour the dead but to educate the living. Authoritative lists of the days, vigils or eves of saints and martyrs were drawn up by the Church, a method followed by Auguste Comte in his Positivist Calendar, in which the names associated with the days of the year are intended to illustrate the course of human progress. In times of emancipation the people select for themselves heroes and events for commemoration.

The graceful custom of celebrating special anniversaries of great writers arose in the nineteenth century, and the recent Tercentenary of Milton is the most complete and perfect of the series. It has presented two main features—exhibitions, iconographical and bibliographical, and eulogies of the poet, written or spoken. The United States of America share with us the great heritage of Milton's name and fame, and they also have taken a gratifying part in the celebration; but it is mortifying to hear of the many treasures and relics that have passed out of our keeping into theirs.

The object of the popular lecture in a literary commemoration should be exclusively to make the

master himself, his genius and his writings, more thoroughly known and appreciated by the general reader. In Matthew Arnold's words, the lecturer "should have the merit of so touching men and works as to give a real sense of their power and charm." I think it may be claimed that in the following lectures this end has been attained. The lecturers have for the most part resisted the temptation to explain or interpret and have allowed the poet to reveal himself.

The shorter poems of his youth, the pamphlets of his maturer years, and the sublime epics of his approaching age, which so precisely define the three stages in his history, have all been dealt with. Consideration of each of these periods helps to illustrate his character. The most interesting point connected with the first is that although his early influences were rigidly Puritan, his youthful writings show nothing narrow or illiberal. That he had a true enjoyment of the gaiety of life is seen in the well-known and charming lines to the spirit of Mirth:

> "Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
> Jest and youthful jollity,
> Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
> Nods, and becks, and wreathéd smiles,
> Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
> And love to live in dimple sleek;
> Sport that wrinkled care derides,
> And laughter holding both his sides.
> Come, and trip it as you go,
> On the light fantastic toe;
> And in thy right hand lead with thee
> The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty."

Nor does any prejudice or latent antagonism debar him from deeply feeling the beauty of his surroundings as he listens to the Church Service.

> "But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloister's pale,
> And love the high embowéd roof,
> With antic pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light :
> There let the pealing organ blow,
> To the full voiced quire below,
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all heav'n before mine eyes."

His youth was as pure as his whole life ; for the grosser pleasures of the senses he had always a profound distaste. "A certain reservedness of nature, an honest haughtiness, and self-esteem kept me still above those low descents of mind."

The political pamphlets and controversial tracts are naturally less known to the general reader. The virulent rhetoric does not accord with the taste of our time. Milton's perfect integrity is shown here as in all tasks he undertook. The principles he advocated of liberty of thought and expression, and resistance to ecclesiastical interference in civil affairs and to State interference with religious institutions, have entered into the fibre and constitution of the nation itself. The student will always value the pamphlets. The passages in which he has yielded to the tide of his emotions reveal a sublimity of expression, a sense of unexhausted

power, an opulence and dignity which place them in the forefront of the prose literature of the race. In addition to these "purple patches" there are many other passages of singular nobility and beauty:

"When I recall to mind, at last, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge, overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church; how the bright and blissful Reformation, by Divine power, struck through the black and settled night of ignorance and anti-Christian tyranny, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears, and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrancy of Heaven."

The study of Milton in the third period reveals his unique character. Usually when youth passes, contact with life extinguishes enthusiasm, enlarged experience corrects severity of judgment, opinions become modified, and with the widened outlook new views and aspirations are acquired. Nothing of this is to be seen in Milton. Experience has no effect in shaking the stability of his earliest convictions, he maintains everything and repents nothing. His ideas from the first are clear, definite, sanctioned by his conscience, and are maintained to the end. Nor could adversity affect them in the least degree. He suffered blindness, neglect, personal danger, scandalous misrepresentation; he saw the end of the Commonwealth, the people ceasing to care for the liberty he had striven for, the members of his party imprisoned, or executed, or banished. He remained steadfast, unsubdued. But, though his character was unaltered, his poetic genius was transformed. The long years of controversy had passed, and his

mind was free to cope with his sublime ideal. He had seen Heaven opened, and he would "hold up the mirror," not, indeed, to Nature, but to the "ways of God to man." So great a theme demanded a grander, if severer, style "swayed In perfect diapason"!

We have become familiar with many beautiful and illuminating estimates of Milton during the last few months, some gathered from the past, and some inspired by the celebration. An acute and sympathetic description of Milton is given by M. Taine in his 'Littérature Anglaise,' and some typical passages selected by Sainte-Beuve, and quoted in one of his essays, may fitly be given here:

"John Milton n'est point une de ces âmes fiévreuses, impuissantes contre elles-mêmes, que la verve saisit par secousses, que la sensibilité maladive précipite incessamment au fond de la douleur ou de la joie, que leur flexibilité prépare à représenter la diversité des caractères, que leur tumulte condamne à peindre le délire et les contrariétés des passions. La science immense, la logique serrée et la passion grandiose, voilà son fond. Il a l'esprit lucide et l'imagination limitée. Il est incapable de trouble et il est incapable de métamorphoses. Il conçoit la plus haute des beautés idéales, mais il n'en conçoit qu'une. Il n'est pas né pour le drame, mais pour l'ode. Il ne crée pas des âmes, mais il construit des raisonnements et ressent des émotions. Émotions et raisonnements, toutes les forces et toutes les actions de son âme se rassemblent et s'ordonnent sous un sentiment unique, celui du sublime, et l'ample fleuve de la poésie lyrique coule hors de lui, impétueux, uni, splendide comme une nappe d'or. . . .

"Il ne considérait point les objets face à face, et de plain-pied, en mortel, mais de haut comme ces archanges de Goethe (*cf.* Faust). . . Ce n'était point la *vie* qu'il

sentait, comme les maîtres de la Renaissance, mais la *grandeur*, à la façon d'Eschyle et des prophètes hébreux, esprits virils et lyriques comme le sien, qui, nourris comme lui dans les émotions religieuses et dans l'enthousiasme continu, ont étalé comme lui la pompe et la majesté sacerdotales. Pour exprimer un pareil sentiment, ce n'était pas assez des images, et de la poésie qui ne s'adresse qu'aux yeux ; il fallait encore des sons, et cette poésie plus intime qui, purgée de représentations corporelles, va toucher l'âme : il était musicien, et artiste ; ses hymnes avançaient avec la lenteur d'une mélopée et la gravité d'une déclamation ; . . . il fait comprendre ce mot de Platon son maître, que les mélodies vertueuses enseignent la vertu."*

Domestic unhappiness was the real tragedy of Milton's life, and this sprang directly out of his opinions of and attitude towards women. He chose his first wife with less care and foresight than is usual in buying a house, and felt deeply injured when the union failed to realise "the noblest and most divine ends of the institution." He attributed the blame of this unhappy failure to his wife, instead of to his own imprudence, attacked the modern ideal of the sanctity of marriage, and advocated a return to præ-Christian if not anti-Christian ideals. The most serious and pathetic results of all this are seen in his relations with his children. The cold and stern demands of service, the total absence of sympathy and demonstration of interest in their happiness congealed and checked the natural budding of filial affection. A better father, if a lesser man, would have lavished his affection upon those three daughters and received it back a hundredfold. Blindness, poverty,

* From the First Edition, 1863.

neglect, advancing age would have disappeared in the summer of their love. The repulsive picture of their cowed resentment, paltry deceit, constant rebellion, and implied aversion may be toned down, but cannot be painted out.

Milton's moral complexity and mental isolation make it very difficult to reach that degree of sympathetic understanding which enables us to feel that we *know* him. The self-revealing sayings, in other biographies so helpful, here exhibit a sublimity of ideal which seems to mark him as one apart.

"He who would not be frustrated of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem . . . not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities unless he have in himself the experience and practice of all that which is praiseworthy."

"It is not necessarily a misery to be blind; the only misery is not to be able to endure blindness."

There is something majestic in his steady consistency, his unruffled serenity, his self-consecration to the highest things, and his capacity for transmuting calamity into moral strength and triumphant virtue.

In our insular and protestant way we have canonised him not alone, I think, as the author of 'Comus' and the 'Paradise Lost,' but even more as a brave, simple and patient soul who fought a good fight and died with his face towards the foe.

P. W. A.

PORTRAITS OF MILTON.

BY GEORGE C. WILLIAMSON, LITT.D.

At the request of the Editor, I am supplying to this volume a few notes concerning the four illustrations contained in it, and those persons who desire more detailed information regarding the portraits of Milton may be referred to the privately printed and illustrated copy of my catalogue of the Milton Tercentenary celebration at Cambridge, to be found in the library of the Society.

Milton at the Age of 10.

The portrait representing Milton at the age of ten is, perhaps, one of the most interesting of English national portraits. It was painted in 1618 by the young Dutch painter Cornelis Janssens, who has also been called Jansens van Keulen, or Jansen van Keulen, and who is generally known in England as Cornelius Jansen.

The artist was certainly residing in London in 1618. It has been suggested, with some probability, that he was born in this country, but other critics assert that he was born in Amsterdam, and came over to England early in the seventeenth century. An eminent Dutch writer has suggested that as the Janssens of Amsterdam were makers of musical

instruments, it is at least possible that one of the persons to whom the young artist had a letter of introduction was the elder Milton, who was well known as a musician, and greatly interested in musical instruments. There is a tradition that Janssen resided for a while in Bread Street, where young Milton was born, and according to certain documents, Bread Street was at one time reckoned as being within the liberty of Blackfriars, where we know for a fact the artist lived. Whatever may have been the reason, it appears to be clear that one of the earliest portraits painted by the young Dutch painter was this one representing the son of the scrivener of Bread Street, in his neat lace frill, with a black braided dress fitting closely around his figure. John Milton was a child of unusual promise, and was being educated by his parents with every possible advantage and the most sedulous care. As Dr. Masson states in his 'Life of Milton,' "the portrait is that of a very grave and intelligent little Puritan boy with auburn hair. The prevailing expression in the face is a lovable seriousness, and in looking at it one can well imagine that those lines from 'Paradise Regained,' which the first engraver ventured to inscribe under the portrait, were really written by the poet with some reference to his own recollected childhood :

> 'When I was yet a child, no childish play
> To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
> Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
> What might be public good; myself I thought
> Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
> All righteous things.'"

The special interest of this boyish portrait consists in the fact that we possess almost all the evidence concerning its history, from the time when it was painted, down to the present day. Whether Milton possessed it as a young man or not, we cannot say, but probably it came to him on the death of his father, for it was most certainly in the poet's possession, and in that of his third wife, and is mentioned in the probate inventory of her effects at Nantwich, under date 1727. It was also alluded to by Deborah Clarke, Milton's only surviving daughter. There is a letter in existence from George Vertue the engraver, dated August 12th, 1721, in which he describes a visit he had paid to her two days before. She had been lost sight of, by literary people for many years, and it had been supposed that she had died, but in 1718 Addison heard that she was living in Spitalfields, old and in poverty. He asked her to come and see him, and to bring with her any papers or other evidence to prove her Milton birth, but when she came into his presence, and was about to explain herself, he said, "Madam, you need no other voucher, your face is a sufficient testimonial whose daughter you are." He conversed with her, said he hoped he might be able to procure her a small pension, and gave her a small gratuity, but his death prevented the proposal of a pension from taking effect. A couple of years afterwards as we have stated, Vertue visited her, taking her advice regarding the authenticity of a portrait of the poet he had been asked to engrave. In the course of conversation, she told him that her stepmother owned two portraits of the poet, one the boy

portrait to which we are now making reference, and the other the student portrait to which we shall next allude. On the death of Mrs. Milton the portrait of Milton as a boy, was sold by the executors to Mr. Charles Stanhope, and on his death was purchased at the sale of his effects on the 3rd of June, 1760, for 31 guineas. The purchaser was Mr. Thomas Hollis, who, in his 'Memoirs,' states that "he had seen the picture at Mr. Stanhope's about two months before, when that gentleman told him that he bought it of the executors of Milton's widow for 20 guineas." After the sale, Lord Harrington, Mr. Stanhope's relative, explained to Mr. Hollis that the picture had been included in the auction by mistake, that it was not intended to have been sold, and that he desired to retain it in the possession of his family; but Mr. Hollis replied to the effect that "His Lordship's whole estate should not purchase it," and so highly did Hollis value the picture that on one occasion, when his lodgings in Covent Garden caught fire, he "walked calmly out of the house with this picture by Jansen in his hand, neglecting to save any other portable article of value."

In 1760 Hollis had an engraving made from the portrait by J. B. Cipriani. The original portrait was bequeathed by Thomas Hollis to his friend Thomas Brand, who assumed the name of Hollis, and went to reside at The Hyde, on the estate bequeathed to him by his old friend. He also took a great interest in this picture, and employed W. M. Gardiner to make another engraving from it, which was published on June 4th, 1794, and appeared in

Boydell's 'Milton,' three volumes royal folio. He in his turn bequeathed it in 1804 to his friend, Dr. Disney, who left it to his son, Mr. Edgar Disney, in 1816. The picture was carefully inspected in 1849 by Masson, who described it in his 'Life of Milton,' and it was engraved for a third time by Edward Radclyffe, in order that it might appear as a frontispiece to the book. Mr. Radclyffe's engraving was made, according to the inscription upon it, "after a photograph from the original picture." In 1883 Mr. Edgar Disney sent the picture to be sold at Christie's, but it was bought in. It was, however, submitted for sale again on the 22nd of March, 1884, and purchased by Mr. J. Passmore Edwards, and is still in the possession of that gentleman.

After Mr. Passmore Edwards purchased the picture it was again lost sight of, by those of us who were studying the portraits of Milton; until a week or two before the Milton exhibition at Cambridge, and then, by a series of fortuitous circumstances, its whereabouts became known, and it was alluded to in the 'Times' of June 3rd, 1908, and lent by its owner to the exhibition, where its appearance created a great sensation.

Milton at the Age of 21.

The second portrait, which, like the first, was in the possession of Mrs. Milton, has an almost equally interesting history. It was sold by the executors to Mr. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, and in 1731, four years after Mrs. Milton's

death, we know that it was in his possession, as it was engraved by Vertue. Another engraving of it appeared in 1794, in Boydell's 'Milton,' and then after that date an interesting circumstance took place with regard to it. We do not know by whom the original portrait was painted, but Mr. Arthur Onslow inscribed on the back of it the statement that he bought it from Mr. Cumberbatch, Mrs. Milton's executor, in 1729, for £21, that it hung in her chamber till her death, and that her husband had given it her, to show her, what he was like in his youth. Mrs. Milton's evidence was corroborated by a certain Mr. Hawkins Brown, who told Speaker Onslow on the 8th of October, 1753, that he had known Mrs. Milton well, had visited her often, and well remembered the picture and her statement about it. Mr. Onslow, who afterwards became Lord Onslow, was a notable collector of portraits, and valued this one very highly. He had a great friend, Lord Harcourt, who was keenly anxious to possess the portrait, and Lord Onslow, on his part, very much wanted to own a portrait of Pope which belonged to his friend. They could not, however, agree to exchange, and therefore copies of the two portraits were made for them; and our illustration is taken from the copy made for Lord Harcourt by Benjamin Van der Gucht, which now belongs to the Right Hon. Lewis Harcourt, and hangs at Nuneham. Fortunately for history, Van der Gucht, who was Vertue's master, copied most carefully on the back of his canvas the original statement made by the Speaker concerning the portrait, and added to it a further statement, detailing

the part he had taken in the preparation of the copy, and the reason for the work. The original Onslow portrait has disappeared. There are many stories respecting it. According to one, it was sold in 1828 for the sum of £8 12*s.* to a Mr. Moore or More, together with a number of other English portraits. According to another account, it was "only a daub, purporting to be a copy," that was sold on that occasion, and the original portrait had already been destroyed by Lord Onslow's successor in the title, who was annoyed by visitors who constantly wished to see it; and according to a third statement, the portrait was given away by a later Lord Onslow to one of his friends, and only a copy of it was retained by him. Whatever may be the case, the original has been lost for many years, but, thanks to the friendship between the two men, the copy at Nuneham gives us an authentic representation of the appearance of Milton when he was a student at Christ's College.

Milton at the Age of 62.

The third portrait is the one drawn and engraved by Faithorne, dated 1670, when Milton was 62 years old, and we have Faithorne's express statement underneath it, that he had drawn it from life. It was the frontispiece to Milton's 'History of Britain,' and replaced the only other engraved portrait which had been issued, the one produced in 1645 by William Marshall, the subject of Milton's humorous Greek epigram in which he laughed to

scorn the fact of the portrait being considered as a likeness of himself. There is no drawing extant for the Faithorne engraving, although it is quite possible that some day or other the artist's original sketch, whether in pencil or pastel, may be discovered, but neither of the two pastel portraits which are attributed to Faithorne, and which now belong to Mr. Clinton Baker, and to Sir Robert Hobart, can be accepted as the original for this engraving, differing from it, as they do, in almost every detail of costume. Whether or not they are both the work of Faithorne, is a question with which we are unable to deal in this place. It is referred to at some length in the work already alluded to, and the engravings derived from these two pastel portraits are there described.

The Frontispiece.

The full-face pencil portrait, the last of our four illustrations to be noticed, is the work of Jonathan Richardson, signed by the painter, and dated 1737. It is clearly derived from one of the two pastel portraits just alluded to, probably from the one in the possession of Sir Robert Hobart, which is said to have been at one time in the possession of Richardson, and it was the artist's drawing for his engraving, which he declares was made from "a portrait in crayons in his own collection." He does not tell us who was the painter who was responsible for the portrait, nor does he give us very much information respecting it, but we have every reason to believe

that the original was undoubtedly an authentic portrait of the poet, and was that from which many of the engravings were derived, while it was most certainly at one time in the possession of Milton's own publisher, Jacob Tonson. These four illustrations enable us to know what was the appearance of the poet at four important stages in his life.

There is one other portrait respecting which a few words must be said, although it is not illustrated in this volume. It is known as the Woodcock portrait, and is believed to represent Milton when he was about 48, at a period of his life for which we have no other representation of him. It is in miniature, of undoubtedly contemporary work, and it bears a strong resemblance to the poet, and possesses many notable characteristics in the way of colouring and expression, such as Aubrey alludes to in his description of Milton's appearance. It is now in the possession of the writer of these notes, who acquired it from the Woodcock family, in whose possession it has been since 1658, when Catherine Woodcock, Milton's second wife, died after her very short married life. The statement of the Woodcock family is that on the death of Mrs. Milton it came to her niece, from her descending in direct succession down to the Miss Woodcock, whose daughter sold it to its present owner.

MILTON'S KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC.

BY WILLIAM HENRY HADOW, M.A., MUS. BAC.

The charter of independence, claimed during the eighteenth century by the symphonic forms of instrumental music, has enriched the world of art with a new kingdom, but at the cost of some severance and alienation. It has made a breach between the musician and the poet. Once, when the basis of all great music was vocal, the two functions were often united in the same person, and where they were separate worked as a rule in unbroken sympathy and comradeship. Now the half of music has withdrawn to its own domain, and poetry has watched it go sometimes with regret, sometimes with indifference, and sometimes, I would venture to say, with contempt. "La musique," says one nineteenth century writer, "est le plus désagréable de tous les sons." "Like all poets," says another, "I hate music and know nothing about it." Even when the tone is gentler and more friendly it is not very often more comprehending. Stanzas inscribed "For music" are not generally of the poet's best; his treatment of the sister art, when it goes beyond some polite statement of emotional pleasure, is usually either fantastic—full of roundelays and clavicitherns because these are names that sound

well in a verse—or an amateur's venture upon a sea of half-understood technicalities.

It is therefore worth recalling that the gravest, noblest, and most austere of our English poets is the one to whom music was the most intimate of delights. To this many influences contributed. First, in the Elizabethan age a musical training was recognised as an almost necessary part of an educated gentleman's equipment. Thomas Morley's famous treatise, the 'Plain and Easy Introduction' (1597), opens with a dialogue between scholar and master, in which the scholar complains that he had been invited to a social gathering, that the madrigal-books had been handed round, and that he had been put to open shame by his inability to sing his descant at sight. Secondly, Milton's father was not only a skilled performer, but a notable composer of music. One of his works appears in the 'Triumphs of Oriana,'* that monument of which every stone is precious; others attained a high reputation in his own day, and have honourably survived to ours.† The allusion to his art in the poem, 'Ad Patrem,' is from more than one point of view significant:

> Nunc tibi quid mirum si me genuisse poetam
> Contigerit, caro si jam prope sanguine juncti
> Cognatas artes studiumque affine sequamur:—
> Ipse volens Phoebus se dispertire duobus
> Altera dona mihi dedit altera dona parenti,
> Dividuumque Deum genitorque puerque tenemus.
> (61—66.)

* The six-part madrigal, 'Fair Orian in the Morn' (1601).

† Several anthems in four, five, and six parts. Burney (iii, 134) calls him "equal in science, if not genius, to the best musicians of his age." Two tunes written or adapted by him for Ravenscroft's Psalter are still in use.

Assuredly that was a time when music and sweet poetry agreed.

Third, and most important of all, Milton was himself a musician. His training seems to have begun in childhood. As a schoolboy he frequently attended the services in St. Paul's, where, for a time at least, Adrian Batten was organist, and he has witnessed to their indelible impression in the well-known lines of 'Il Penseroso':

> Then let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voiced choir below,
> In service high and anthem clear
> As may with sweetness through mine ear
> Dissolve me into ecstasies
> And bring all Heaven before my eyes.
>
> (161–6.)

During his visit to Rome he makes special mention of a private concert at the house of Cardinal Barberini. It is at least probable that he met Frescobaldi, then organist of St. Peter's and one of the greatest composers in Europe; and his admiration for Leonora Baroni is enshrined in three 'Epigrams' of the most dignified and august praise with which any singer in the world has ever been celebrated. In his life, after his return to England, music held no inconsiderable place. He invites Lawrence—

> To hear the lute well-touched with artful voice
> Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air.

During his older age his one constant recreation was, as Johnson tells us, to play on the organ and sing himself, or hear others sing. One may per-

haps find an allusion to this in the lines of 'Paradise Regained':

> And if I would delight my private hours
> With music or with poem, where so soon
> As in our native language can I find
> Such solace? All our law and story strewed
> With Hymns, our Psalms with artful terms inscribed,
> Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon.
>
> (iv, 331–6.)

Throughout his whole career he was faithful to that first love which, in 'l'Allegro,' sets music as the climax and consummation of all human pleasures:

> And ever against eating cares
> Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
> Married to immortal verse :
> Such as the meeting soul may pierce
> In notes with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
> With wanton heed and giddy cunning
> The melting voice through mazes running,
> Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony:
> That Orpheus self may heave his head
> From golden slumber on a bed
> Of heaped Elysian flowers and hear
> Such strains as would have won the ear
> Of Pluto to have quite set free
> His half-regained Euridice. (135—150.)

The time at which Milton lived, though less fertile in great composers than either the sixteenth or the eighteenth centuries, is one of unusual interest to the musical historian. Opera began, so far as any musical form can be said to begin, in 1600, and we know how important a part in Milton's career

was the use of music in certain kinds of dramatic representation. The first distinctive school of organ composition belongs to the early seventeenth century, so does the current use of the violin in orchestral and chamber music; the most probable date of Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book is about 1630. Again, Milton's life is almost exactly conterminous with the transition between the pure, sculpturesque ideals of the madrigalian era and the warmer, more human, more expressive melodies which have led the way to our modern art. In England—and England stood at the forefront of both—the old order passed away with William Byrd, who died in 1623, and Orlando Gibbons, who died in 1625; the new came into full blossom and beauty with Purcell, who was born about 1658, and who within two years of Milton's death was organist of Westminster Abbey. In the whole record of musical history there is no chapter more full of initiatives and experiments, of conflicting ideas and changing methods. It is little wonder that a poet who, by training, by temperament, by predilection, was in close sympathy with the musical life of his day, should have found in it not only a ready source of illustration and episode, but, what is far more vital, the true and natural embodiment of his innermost thought.

Indeed his whole universe is saturated with music. The angels sing, not only for adoration,

> Speak ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
> Angels, for ye behold Him, and with songs
> And choral symphonies, day without night,
> Circle His throne rejoicing. (P. L., v, 160–4.)

but at their play in the celestial meadow

> That day and other solemn days they spent
> In song and dance about the sacred hill.
> (P. L., v, 618–9.)

When the council in Pandemonium breaks up, some of the fallen angels

> Retreated in a silent valley sing
> With notes angelical to many a harp
> Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall
> By doom of battle. . . . .
> Their song was partial, but the harmony
> (What could it else, when Spirits immortal sing?)
> Suspended Hell and took with ravishment
> The thronging audience. (P. L., ii, 546–55.)

and when the host sets forth

> Anon they move
> In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mode
> Of flutes and soft recorders, such as raised
> To heights of noblest temper heroes old
> Arming to battle, and instead of rage
> Deliberate valour breathed. (P. L., i, 549–54.)

In Eden, Adam sings his magnificent hymn of praise and calls upon all nature to respond:—

> His praise, ye winds that from four quarters blow,
> Breathe soft or loud, and wave your tops, ye pines,
> With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
> Fountains and ye that warble as ye flow
> Melodious music warbling tune his praise,
> Join voices all ye living souls, ye birds
> That singing up to Heaven's gate ascend,
> Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
> Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk

The earth, and stately tread or lowly creep,
Witness if I be silent morn or even
To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
(P. L., 192—204.)

It is the same throughout the shorter poems. The Hymn on the Nativity rises to a cry of pure rapture :—

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so,
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow,
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to th' angelic symphony.*

The spirit in Arcades tells how—

Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie
To lull the daughters of necessity,
And keep unsteady nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune. (68—72.)

It was the song of the lady in Comus which "smoothed the raven down of darkness till it smiled," and which—

Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfume
And stole upon the air, that even silence
Was took ere she was 'ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature and be never more
Still to be so displaced. (556–60.)

* See Stanzas IX—XIII.

I omit the many incidental references to music as an adjunct of mirth and feasting,* because this view of its function is more or less common to all poets; but it may be well to note a somewhat different tone in two passages from the prose works. In 'Areopagitica' Milton uses the impossibility of restricting music as a *reductio ad absurdum* for the restriction of the printed page.

> If we think to regulate printing thereby to rectify manners we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung but what is grave and Doric. . . . It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house: they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? . . . The villages also must have their visitors to enquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck read, for these are the countryman's Arcadias and Montemayors.

In the letter to Hartlib he includes music, not indeed among the necessities of education, but among the chief of its luxuries:—

> The interim of unsweating themselves and convenient rest before meat may both with profit and delight be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard or learned, either while the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied

* P. L., i, 788; P. R., ii, 362-3; P. L., xi, 577—592; Comus, 172-4, and others.

chords of some choice composer—sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices either to religious, civil, or martial ditties, which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions.

It will be observed that one of Milton's favourite epithets for music is "artful"—kunstmässig. He is no believer in the superstition, not wholly dead even at the present day, that music is a matter of some remote and unaccountable inspiration which needs no intellectual gift and no training in craftsmanship. On this point he well knew what he was saying. The scope and nature of his work do not afford much room for the display of technical and formal knowledge, but the passages already quoted have been ill-chosen if they do not reveal that he spoke of the art with an intimate and internal acquaintance, and to them may be appended two others which no man could have written in Milton's time without a remarkable degree of technical proficiency. One is from the vision in 'Paradise Lost,' Book XI.

> The sound
> Of instruments that made melodious chime
> Was heard, of harp and organ, and who moved
> Their stops and chords was seen: his volant touch
> Instinct through all proportions low and high
> Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
> (554–9.)

This is simply the best description of a fugue ever written. Every word is right—"volant,"

"proportions low and high," "transverse," "resonant"—as we read these lines the whole fugal form rises before us. And what makes them the more remarkable is the date at which they appeared. The first scientific treatise on fugue was that of Fux; the first supreme master of fugal writing was John Sebastian Bach. When 'Paradise Lost' was printed Fux was a child of three and Sebastian Bach was not yet born. The artists from whom Milton gained his knowledge must have been the first pioneers—the two Gabrielis at Venice, Frescobaldi, and his pupil Frohberger at Rome.* With the two latter he was probably in personal contact; in any case we may wonder at the insight which enabled him to state with such truth and justice a highly technical form that was still in its infancy.

Not less interesting is the sonnet to Henry Lawes (1595—1662).

> Whose tuneful and well-measured song
> First taught our English music how to span
> Words with just note and accent, not to scan
> With Midas ears committing short and long.

Recent historians have questioned whether Lawes is entitled to this praise of invention and discovery; the question is here beside the mark. We may allow something for a friend's partiality; the fact remains that in this sonnet we have a most valuable piece of technical criticism. Every man who has tried to set a poem to music knows the difficulty

* Frohberger was studying with Frescobaldi when Milton visited Rome in 1638.

of adapting with perfect ease and smoothness the rhythm of the verse to the rhythm of the melody. There is a double allegiance; if the tune is to preserve its form it may place an accented note on a slight and unimportant syllable; if it moulds itself exactly to the words it may weaken or impair the shapeliness of its curve. And there can be no doubt that some composers of Milton's time tended to solve the problem by giving the prerogative place to the music, and letting the verse shift for itself. It is a serious fault in composition, and Milton has earned the gratitude of all true musicians by his tuneful and well-measured censure.

The noblest of all his poems or music still remains to be quoted, and this paper can reach no fitter end than by recalling the sublime words in which he has set the art of song upon a pedestal four-square, eternal, that shall never be removed. They are familiar to all lovers of poetry, but it is impossible to forego the sheer pleasure of repeating them.

Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heav'ns joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixt power employ
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce.
And to our high-raised fantasy present
That undisturbed song of pure content,
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee
Where the bright seraphim in burning row
Their loud uplifted angel trumpets blow,
And the cherubic host in thousand choirs
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires

With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
Hymns devout and holy psalms
Singing everlastingly;
That we on earth with undiscording voice
May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did till disproportioned sin
Jarred against Nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
Oh may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
To His celestial consort us unite,
To live with Him and sing in endless morn of light.

A NOTE ON MILTON'S SHORTER POEMS.

BY ERNEST HARTLEY COLERIDGE, M.A., HON.F.R.S.L.

Milton's prose works were first collected in three closely-printed folio volumes, whereof the greater part is a *terra incognita* to the general. 'Paradise Lost' is some 670 lines longer than the 'Aeneid.' Few, indeed, is that audience, that little flock of patient or ardent souls who stretch their ears to every strain of the heavenly harmony. We are accustomed to think of Milton, not only as a great, but a voluminous poet. And yet his shorter or minor poems, the poems on several occasions, composed at various times, even when printed in Baskerville's sumptuous type, barely fill some 230 pages; and if we except his great political sonnets, a few additional but still uninspiring paraphrases of the Psalms, and one Latin ode, 'Ad Joannem Rousium,' this scanty harvest was gathered and gleaned before he had completed his thirtieth year. One of the greatest, if not the greatest of all lyrical poets, ancient or modern, ceased to build the lofty rhyme before he essayed his life-work as a poet. Of these occasional poems as poems it would be idle to speak. It is inconceivable that they contain a thought or an allusion which has not been grappled with and unravelled by great critics, from Warton to the

present day, and whatever can be known or said about them is within reach of the casual reader. But it may be worth while to ask ourselves why Milton broke with lyrical poetry, and also to try and put into words "what and wherein it doth exist, This light, this glory, this beautiful and beauty-making power," in his earlier melodies.

We cannot give the exact dates of all the shorter poems. The great 'Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity' was begun during the last week of December, 1629. We may surmise that the unfinished 'Lines on the Passion,' the 'Circumcision,' the shorter odes 'Upon Time,' and 'At a Solemn Music,' were written in that year or in 1630. We know that the 'Epitaph on Shakespeare,' which was published in the Second Folio of 1632, was written in 1630, that the 'Arcades,' 'L'Allegro' and 'Penseroso' were written at Horton between 1632 and 1638, that 'Comus' was certainly written in 1634, and that 'Lycidas,' which was composed in 1637, was published with other elegies in honour of Henry King in 1638. Thenceforward, save in a few great sonnets, Milton forebore to utter the thoughts of his heart in rhyming verse. Now that is a psychological curiosity which, in Bacon's words, is "worthy a wise man's consideration." There were natural and obvious reasons for this self-denying ordinance, and they are worth recounting, for their recital brings the man himself within our ken. The passing of youth is one of these obvious reasons. Song is the gift, the indulgence, the passion of youth, and the preoccupations and disillusions of maturity restrain its natural flow. If

Shelley had lived to be forty or fifty he might have suffered an earth-change and ceased to think and feel in song. When Milton's prolonged wander-year was over and he returned to work and duty he set himself a two-fold task, to make scholars and men of a few lads whom kinship and friendship brought to his doors, and in so doing, to make himself a perfect man and a still mightier scholar, and over and above this day labour to do something for England, to help to make England free. We smile or shudder at the syllabus of Greek and Latin authors which these lucky or unlucky youths were encouraged to take up. We wonder what sort of an examination the average headmaster would pass in the "stratagems of Frontinus," or the "stratagems of Polyænus." And what about Columella and Palladius and Oppian? Did Milton really coach his young gentlemen in these authors, or was it only his fun? And there was a "modern side" as well in this phenomenal pupil-room. French and Italian mathematics and cosmography were laps in the endless race after knowledge, stages in that stupendous curriculum. Nor if he practised what he preached were athletics neglected? Our supermaster taught his pupils to fence, exercised them in the "Locks and Gripes of wrestling," and at night, when they ought to have been in bed, instructed them in the rudiments of soldiering. Time was there little or none to "strictly meditate the thankless Muse." But this did not content him. He must needs devote himself to the education of his countrymen in the school of liberty. It is hard indeed to understand why this man, for whom

Nature and Grace had done so much, and to whom Fortune had been sufficiently kind, should have devoted himself to a long, unlovely strife with authority and custom. Why, we ask, should one whose mind must have been a perpetual feast of whatsoever things are rich and dainty and pure have stooped to muddy himself in the ignoble *scrimmage* of theological and political controversy? But thoughts like these are born of our own littleness; we do him wrong being so majestical. We forget that these manifold wranglings were blows struck for freedom, the passionate outpourings of one who loved England more than himself, and what he believed to be God's truth more than either. We wonder at him and laugh or lament, as the mood takes us, but if Milton were "living at this hour" would not he wonder at us, at our patience of the intolerable and our half-hearted balancing of opposites?

For a long interval the poet was merged in the patriot, and because we do not hold with his politics or savour his pedantic and unsavoury jibes we must not withhold our admiration for the self-mastery and splendid self-confidence which could turn to that which was nearest, the one thing needful, and leave the indulgence of genius to a later, if not a milder, day. There is a want of humour, a confusion of judgment in the critical temper, which would gather up the tares before it can look with unmixed delight at the golden cornfield. Dearest is dearest in all the world over. *Le ciel nous vend toujours les biens qu'il nous prodigue.* The calm untroubled spirit which could regard without amazement, and so disregard the pleasures of

the senses, was vexed and perturbed by the confusions and contradictions of custom and society. He could not suffer fools gladly. "Is it a time," he might have said, "to be spinning rhymes when Rome is burning?" "They that clothe their thoughts in soft language are in kings' houses."

Again, in reflecting on Milton's aversion from lyrical poetry, we turn for an explanation to his personal circumstances. Was his life overwhelmed by the disappointment of his marriage and the joylessness of his lot? Was he too sad to pour out his soul in song? Could he have said with Hamlet, "Man delights not me,—nor woman neither"? There is not the slightest evidence that a broken and wounded spirit bound him down to earth and quenched the fire of poetry. If he ever made a woeful ballad to Mary Powell's eyebrows it has not come down to us. Nor did he bewail her flight and prolonged absence in light or serious strains. Nor did he celebrate in verse the contemplated transference of his affections and himself to Miss Davis. If Milton suffered it never occurred to him to set his suffering to a tune. We have no right to speak with any certainty, but to outward appearances he was more angry than hurt. As Mr. Shandy consoled himself for the loss of his son by a discharge of epigrams, Milton salved his wound by formulating an apology for divorce.

> "A book was writ of late call'd Tetrachordon,
> And woven close, both matter, form and stile;
> The subject new: it walk'd the town awhile,
> Numb'ring good intellects;—"

It sounds cheerful. No, it was not a broken heart, but a heart not very easily breakable, that enabled him to refrain from any Byronic wailings and expostulations with his wife. Moreover, the silence of his middle age dates from the publication of 'Lycidas' in 1638, five years and more before he wooed in haste and dragged out that unhoneyed moon of aloes and coloquintida.

To sum up,—his abstention from verse is to be accounted for in the first instance by his absorption in private, and afterwards in public and official business, and secondly, by the self-sufficedness and austerity of his moral being. He was not swayed, perhaps he was not moved, by sentiment. Moreover, he could afford to wait. He knew that when the time came he could and would command the inspiration of a sublimer Muse. But to have written 'Comus' and there an end! To have caught the music of the spheres, to have revealed the loveliness of common things, to have joined in the Archangelic hymn, and to forego the exercise of such gifts and powers —that is passing strange. Dr. Johnson, who had the courage of his limitations, thought that these little poems (he may be referring to the sonnets, but the context implies the shorter poems as a whole) may be dispatched without much anxiety. Milton himself knew better, for in 1645 he published a selection of his minor pieces, and in a second edition in 1673, after he had written 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained,' he included almost every scrap of verse which he had written. He did not regard his juvenilia as worthless, but he did deliberately and of set purpose reject rhyme, and in giving his reasons

for that rejection he exalts unrhymed verse at the expense of rhyming measures. In his preface or advertisement to 'Paradise Lost' he issues his inappellable decree:

"The measure is English heroic verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter; grac'd indeed since by the use of some famous poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance and constraint to express many things otherwise, and, for the most part, worse than they would have express'd them."

There is, of course, nothing more to be said. *Roma locuta est.* In tragedy or epic poetry the elimination of rhyme is the triumph of art. It is the choice of a more excellent way. So did Shakespeare grow both in power and in grace. We have only to compare 'Love's Labour Lost' with 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear' for instance and example. But Milton was not content with this sublime apology for blank verse. He goes on to say:

"Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note, have rejected rime both in longer and shorter works, as have also since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the learned Ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so to vulgar readers, that it

rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem, from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming."

Now, in the first part of this second paragraph, if words have any meaning, he is not only attacking rhymed plays and rhymed epics, but he is casting a slur upon rhyme itself. It is doubtless a vain endeavour to resolve the component parts of poetry, to question the hidden spirit, to anatomize a bodiless essence, and to analyse a breath a mystery. But Milton's attitude towards rhyme, the value of rhyme and its relation to metre are questions which offer points for discussion. And first it is evident that Milton is on the defensive. The republication of Cowley's 'Davideis' in 1668 must have led to comparisons with the 'Paradise Lost.' He was "ever a fighter," and though he had nothing to fear from such rivalry he may have felt that it behoved him to state his own point of view. In a letter prefixed to the first collected edition of Cowley's works, published in 1668, Thomas Sprat, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, affirms that the 'Davideis' "is a better instance and beginning of a divine poem than I ever yet saw in any language—the characters lofty and various, the numbers firm and powerful," and so forth. Milton must have read this eulogy, and in his preface (which is not prefixed to the first edition of 1667, but appears for the first time in some but not other copies of the first edition of 1668) has something to say in behalf of his own numbers, which he prefers to the "jingle of rhyming couplets." But apart from any personal animus, his depreciation of rhyme may

be accounted for, or at any rate the causes may be guessed at. The pride of the successful artist would persuade him to discard adventitious aids; it is not enough to accomplish a feat successfully, but it must be accomplished under the most difficult conditions. It is so easy to produce an effect by the jingling sound of "like endings," so difficult to link together the complex harmonies "long drawn out" of unrhymed verse. But this he had achieved, and from the heights of achievement he would be tempted to regard simpler and easier methods with something like disdain. Then, again, he was steeped in Hebrew poetry. Its beauty and majesty were unsurpassable —a counsel of perfection. Rhyme was an accident of poetry, a separable accident. A measure, a form, an order of some kind was necessary, but the music, the harmony rose and fell with the undulations of passion, with the shifting of the imagery not with the inevitable recurrence of expected sounds. He was a lover of music, and a skilled musician. May he not have regarded the jingle of rhyme, the formal and mechanical rat-tat of words, as a kind of parody or travesty of musical concords? But whether or no he was subject to any or all of these influences his appeal to classical antiquity, to Homer and Virgil, rests on his own statement, and though he is immediately concerned with defending the "neglect of rime" in epic poetry, he leaves us with the impression that he contemplated the possibility of a like "neglect" in lyrical verse. He does not seem to have considered that the English language is not the same instrument as the Latin or even the Greek. Apart from any question of

accent or pronunciation, the words themselves are fashioned in a different mould. It is enough to instance the loss or absence of inflection. There are dactylls and spondees and anapaests in the English language, but they are accidental rather than incidental to the formation of words. The quantity of the syllables is less definite, and there is an innumerable multitude of half and quarter tones. In whatever fashion the Greeks and Romans recited or chanted their verses the prosody is regular and definite. The words as words are susceptible of formal combination in metrical compartments. The fixed measure of line or stanza produced that easy and pleasurable condition of the mind, that suspense of mental toil which bespoke a favourable reception for its peculiar imagery or thought. The mind was left free to apprehend and to assimilate the substance. But our language does not permit us to use these means except as a *tour de force* in a metrical experiment. The form comes between us and the sense. In English lyrical verse the metrical unit is not the unvarying foot or the formal disposition of various but unvarying feet, but an alternation of stress, and in lyrical verse this alternation is emphasized and made delightful by rhyme. Rhyme may be a trick, a jingle, but it may, and often does, contain the seed of poetry in itself. It becomes by the associative instinct or faculty creative and dynamic. There is a glamour of sound which produces that suspension of mental toil and that pleasurable excitement which prepares the mind for the reception of poetical ideas. That which the formal scheme of Alcaic, or Sapphic, or Choriambic

verse effected in Greek and Latin poetry is brought about in English lyrical verse by the melody of rhyme.

In his famous translation of the 'Fifth Ode of the First Book of the Odes of Horace,' Milton "neglected rime," and for all his delicate scholarship and exquisite refinement of style and language it is but a lifeless image of the original. Take the first stanza of Milton's rendering, "almost word for word without rime, according to the Latin measure, as near as the language will permit":—

> "What slender youth bedew'd with liquid odours,
> Courts thee on roses in some pleasant cave,
> Pyrrha? For whom bind'st thou
> In wreaths thy golden hair,
> Plain in thy neatness?"

But the language will not permit. Milton's "Pyrrha" has lost her nameless charm. And yet the English poet was a far lovelier if not a greater lyrist than the Roman.

May we then dare to adumbrate the secret of Milton's distinction as a rhymer? There are stanzas and sequences in his earlier poems which are clear as mountain air and sweet with the fragrance of violets. He sings, and we look upwards to listen to his song. The secret is in the man. This kind cometh not out but by the spiritual passion of a sensuous but unsensual nature. He was the lover of words, and full to overflowing with the thoughts and images of the poets which came before him, and words, like things of life, obeyed his call. In some lines, 'At a Vacation Exercise,' written when he was nineteen, he personifies language as though she were a muse:

"But haste thee strait to do me once a pleasure,
And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure,
Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming slight,
Which takes our late fantastics with delight,
But cull those richest robes and gay'st attire
Which deepest spirits, and choicest wits desire:
I have some naked thoughts that rove about,
And loudly knock to have their passage out.
* * * * *
Yet I had rather, if I were to chuse,
Thy service in some graver subject use,
* * * * *
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and at Heav'n's door
Look in, and see each blissful Deity,
How he before the thunderous throne doth lie,
List'ning to what unshorn Apollo sings
To th' touch of golden wires, while Hebe brings
Immortal nectar to her kingly sire."

In these lines the thought is naked enough, but the metre, the choice of epithets and the vocalisation are splendid. Doubtless, from the first he possessed a mastery over words and a desire and a power to number them in verse. His earliest printed poem, but surely not his first attempt at poetry, 'On the Death of a Fair Infant' (his little niece), written in his seventeenth year, has the fulfilment as well as the promise of genius:

"Yet art thou not inglorious in thy fate;
For so Apollo, with unweeting hand,
Whilom did slay his dearly-lovèd mate—
Young Hyacinth, born on Eurotas' strand,
Young Hyacinth, the pride of Spartan land:
But then transform'd him to a purple flower;
Alack, that so to change thee Winter had no power."

Qualis ab incepto! The Virgilian repetition of the name in the fourth and fifth lines of this stanza which re-appears in 'Lycidas,' is a proof that he was already a maker of harmonies. Another distinguishing feature of Milton's earlier poetry is that he does not write about himself, that the stimulus is from without, and never, in the English poems at any rate, from within. He draws his inspirations from religion, from nature, from books, but not from the tragi-comedy of his own sensations. Life went smoothly with him and he walked on straight, and out of the untroubled and unstained joys of youth—not the 'De Profundis' of wounded pride and extravagant or thwarted desires—he pours out his song. The world would be the poorer if there were no subjective poets, if poets never told their loves or had none to tell, but the world is richer because Milton, at peace with himself, knelt only at the shrine of intellectual beauty.

To what, then, may we compare the peculiar intonation of Milton's lighter lyrics, the songs and interludes in the 'Arcades' and 'Comus'? To the ringing note of a pebbly brook, to the chime of silver bells, to the song of a thrush? It differs from other great and noble verse in its aloofness from the rush and stir, the consciousness and inevitable stain of common life. From whatever source he inherited or borrowed the form of his verse or its images and allusions, in his passionate quest for spiritual beauty he stands alone. It was in this sense that—

"His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

In the 'Ode on the Nativity' one hears the pre-

lusive strains of him who was to write 'Paradise Lost,' "the mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies," the "God-gifted organ-voice of England," whilst in 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' the melody with its delicate variations is rather an accompaniment of the sense than a fugue or fantasia in itself. And what apart from the felicity of language and the enchanting lilt of the verse makes 'L'Allegro,' perhaps, the best loved poem in the English language? I say 'L'Allegro,' for save for the immortal lines on the Nightingale, or "The far off Curfew," and the "Storied windows richly dight," its divine sister 'Il Penseroso' is comparatively unfamiliar. It is because the poem as a whole brings the country, and by the country we in England do not mean grand or picturesque scenery, or even the untilled forest glades of Chaucer and Spencer, but just the country, "hedge-row elms and hillocks green," the country-side which Milton knew and loved, before our very eyes. In 'L'Allegro' realism and idealism have met together, poetry and fact have kissed each other. No one can say of these *rimes* "I am a plain man, and these ecstasies and subtleties are beyond me," or, "I have the soul of a poet and my imagination is starved." It was England, the blessed English fields which inspired him, and he and he alone has paid them honour due.

A word or two may be added with regard to Milton's Latin poems, which should be better known for their own sakes and for the light which they throw on the virtuous, the strenuous, but inevitable youth of the "Lady of Christ's." They are certainly not very easy to construe, but Cowper, who had

learned Latin when Latin was only a moribund language, has done the best of them into admirable English verse, and there is another translation by J. G. Strutt, issued in 1814, which is by no means despicable. By far the most interesting of these 'Poemata' which, he tells us, were written for the most part before he had turned twenty-one, are the two elegies or epistles to his friend Charles Diodati, the hexameter lines 'Ad Patrem,' and the 'Epitaphium Damonis,' a pastoral elegy to Diodati's memory. In the first elegy he tells his friend that he had turned his back on "reedy Cam," and was enjoying himself in London. There had been some trouble with the dons at Christ's, and whether he was or was not in disgrace with them, they were in disgrace with him. Meantime he is fleeting the time merrily, as he tells us, not without a touch of bravado. Men may come and men may go, but youth, especially under-graduate youth, goes on for ever. He is a frequenter of the theatres and he takes his pleasure in Hyde Park and elsewhere discreetly, but by no reason sadly. He meets and passes Amaryllis and Neæra, discourses at some length on their charms, and decides to go back to Cambridge before it is too late. He writes quite simply and naturally about himself and his confessions are all to his credit.

The lines 'Ad Patrem,' which are included in the 'Sylvarum Liber,' are an apology for poetry. It is pleasant to think, as the poem testifies, that Milton loved and honoured and was grateful to his father. His boyish sorrow for the death of his sister's baby and his devotion to the memory of his second wife,

12182

are proofs that he was not wanting in family affection. If there were troubles with his daughters when he was old and blind and gouty, he may not have been wholly to blame. Perhaps they were their mother's rather than their father's daughters.

The concluding lines of the Sixth Elegy, addressed to Charles Diodati, who was spending his Christmas holidays, in the country, assign the composition of the 'Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity' to the last week of December, 1629. Diodati had excused himself for not finishing his verses on the plea of too many and too good Christmas dinners. Milton traverses this plea, and ends the epistle with a report of himself. And this is how he dates his Ode:

"And do you ask me, would you care to know
What task is mine, and if my numbers flow?
The Promised Child, the King of Peace, I sing,
And peaceful years of holy welcoming.
When that rude stable echoed to the cry
Of God-made Flesh—an infant Deity!
Glad were great angels, glad the starry throng
While ruining gods crouch'd low their shrines among.
Christ's birthday morn—I could not choose but bring
To that great Babe a numerous offering."

MILTON AND THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

BY WILLIAM E. A. AXON, LL.D.

THERE is an interesting and important autobiographical section in the 'Second Defence of the People of England,' in which Milton explains the motives of his political writings. When Charles I, defeated in his efforts to force episcopacy upon the unwilling people of Scotland, was obliged to summon the English Parliament for the consideration of the tangled affairs of the nation, there was an outbreak of criticism against the bishops and their claims.

"This," says Milton, "awakened all my attention and my zeal. I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition; that the principles of religion, which were the first objects of our care, would exert a salutary influence on the manners and constitution of the republic; and as I had from my youth studied the distinctions between religion and civil rights, I perceived that, if ever I wished to be of use, I ought, at least, not to be wanting to my country, to the Church, and to so many of my fellow Christians in a crisis of so much danger; I therefore determined to relinquish the other pursuits in which I was engaged, and to transfer the

whole force of my talents and my industry to this one important object."

When Milton had finished his share of the controversy as to the form of Church government he saw that the principles for which he had been contending were of wide-reaching application. "When, therefore," he continues, "I perceived that there were three species of liberty which are essential to the happiness of social life—religious, domestic, and civil; and as I had already written concerning the first, and the magistrates were strenuously active in obtaining the third, I determined to turn my mind to the second, or the domestic species. As this seemed to involve three material questions—the condition of the conjugal tie, the education of youth, and the free publication of the thoughts—I made them objects of distinct consideration."

He then, after referring to his tracts on marriage and divorce, and on education, says, "Lastly, I wrote my 'Areopagitica' in order to deliver the press from the restraints with which it was encumbered; that the power of determining what was true and what was false, what ought to be published and what suppressed, might no longer be entrusted to a few illiterate and illiberal individuals, who refused their sanction to any works which contained views or sentiments at all above the level of the vulgar superstition."

His writings on the third branch—civil liberty—came later, when all Europe rang with the fame of his 'Eikonoklastes.'

Thus, if we may accept Milton's own account, the underlying principle of all those writings, in which

he deals with the problems of practical life, was the love of freedom, and the conviction that liberty alone was the sure foundation for personal happiness and for national prosperity. Whilst his statement agrees with the chronology of his writings, there were personal considerations which determined the order in which he dealt with these subjects.

That he strongly resented the Laudian policy, which, in the effort to attain an external aspect of conformity, did not hesitate to impose pains and penalties on all public discussion and on all expression of disagreement, is certain, and his treatises against prelacy were all published without the leave or license of the authorities.

His domestic troubles no doubt turned his thoughts to the dangerous topic of divorce, and this made him an object of suspicion to those on whom the State had devolved the thankless and, indeed, impossible task of regulating literature. His tracts against the bishops were issued without license, so was the 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce;' but for 'The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce' he had the authority of a friendly licenser, John Downham, and for the tract on Education that of James Cranford.

The 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce' was denounced by Herbert Palmer in his sermon before the Houses of Parliament on August 13th, 1644. "A wicked book," he said, "is abroad and uncensured, though deserving to be burnt, whose author hath been so impudent as to set his name to it and dedicate it to yourselves." The Assembly of Divines, a body of which Palmer was a prominent member,

was greatly exercised by the increase of sectaries and heresies. The Stationers' Company was also perturbed, and presented a petition to the House of Commons complaining of the issue of unlicensed and unregistered pamphlets, and specifically naming Milton's 'Divorce' tract. The old regulation of the press, set forth with especial stringency in Laud's Star Chamber decree of 1637, had broken down. Members of the Stationers' Company printed unlicensed books without compunction, and some of them even reprinted the copyright books of their brethren. The number of licensed books in 1641 was 240; in 1642 only 76. Next year came a change. There were 35 licensed books in the first half of 1643, and 333 in the second half.*

The reason for the increase is to be found in "An Order of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament for the regulating of printing, and for suppressing the great late abuses and frequent disorders in printing many false, scandalous, seditious, libellous, and unlicensed pamphlets to the great defamation of religion and government. Also authorising the Masters and Wardens of the Company of Stationers to make diligent search, seize and carry away all such books as they shall find printed, or reprinted, by any man having no lawful interest in them, being entered into the Hall Book to any other man as his proper copies."

This decree was ordered on June 14th, 1643, to be printed and published, and was followed up by the appointment of licensers. Twelve divines were nominated, any one of whom might give his "Im-

* Masson's 'Milton,' iii, 269.

primatur" to a book dealing with religion. To a judge and three men of known scholarship were entrusted polite literature and history; three lawyers for legal publications; the three Kings-at-Arms for heraldry; mathematics, almanacs, and prognostications were entrusted to the examination of the Gresham Lecturer, or John Booker, an astrologer and an almanac maker himself, whilst to the Clerk of the Stationers' Company was entrusted the task of dealing with small pamphlets and other things regarded as of no importance.

Milton, as we have seen, issued his 'Doctrine of Divorce' without having obtained the signature of a licenser. What chance would he have had of securing such a favour? But when it came to a second edition, to show that he accepted the full responsibility, the dedication was now signed in full with his name. The petition just named of the Stationers' Company was referred by the House of Commons to the "Committee of Printing," to which four additional members were tacked on. The Committee appear to have drafted an amendment of the ordinance, but in some mysterious way it seems to have been lost at an uncertain point between the House of Lords and the House of Commons.* There may have been political reasons for the manner in which Milton was left untouched. He was named by the Assembly of Divines in a group of heretics which included Hanserd Knollys, and Roger Williams, whose 'Bloody Tenent of Persecution for cause of Conscience' (1644) is the first distinct declaration in the English language of religious liberty and equality.

* Masson's 'Milton,' iii, 274.

The Presbyterians, who were then the greatest opponents of a toleration of other forms of worship, were checked by the Cromwellian motion for an "accommodation" which the House passed September 13th, 1644, and though they intermittently denounced heretics and the toleration of them, the growing influence of Independency made it impossible for them to work their full will.

It was, therefore, in a time of civil controversy and of the most violent conflict of opinions on all matters of theology, of Church government, a time when the doctrine of mutual toleration of religious differences was held by large sections, probably by the majority of the whole nation, to be a pestilent heresy dangerous alike to Church and State, that Milton brought forward his plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing. The 'Areopagitica' came before the public on November 24th, 1644, as may be judged by the date which George Thomassen, according to his laudable custom, wrote on his copy now in the British Museum. The secondary title is "A Speech of Mr. John Milton, for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England." Is it possible that it may be an expansion of some address to that Committee of Printing to whom Milton had been denounced? His neglect of the licensing law was notorious, and his 'Doctrine of Divorce' had shocked many. The Assembly of Divines had done their best to secure the punishment of Milton, but the stars in their courses had fought against these persecuting spirits. He was not only unharmed by their bitterness, but had now come before the public in a tract of forty pages that

for brilliance, cogency, and eloquence was without parallel in the English language—and has remained so to this day. Milton's 'Areopagitica' is prose, but it is the prose of a poet, gorgeous in imagery, and full of noble music. It is the work of a scholar who knows the lessons of history. And above all, it is full of generous confidence in the eternal victory of Truth over Falsehood, and of Right over Wrong.

Professor Henry Morley has rightly called attention to the skill with which Milton's speech is constructed. The exordium is one that would ensure the attention of all, and the favourable attention of many. Then follows the statement of the case against the order for the regulation of printing, a custom which he treats as having died with the prelates. The censorship of books, he declares, had for its inventors those whom Parliament would be loth to own; it can avail nothing to the suppression of scandalous, seditious, and libellous books; and lastly, that it will be to the "discouragement of all learning and the stop of truth." This is the thesis which Milton defends with opulence of learning and magnificence of diction. Are there any limitations to this liberty of the press? Milton says: "I deny not but that it is of the greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors," but he quickly minimises this concession by emphasising the danger of destroying a good book. "Many a man lives a burden to the

earth ; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."* After some reference to Greek and Roman precedents Milton claims that the censorship is an invention of the Church of Rome—a sure method of damaging it in the eyes of the Long Parliament. He quotes the certificates of the examiners and licensers from Davanzati Bostischi's 'Scisma d'Inghilterra,' published at Florence in 1638. This papal example had been followed by "inquisiturient bishops and the attendant minorites their chaplains."† The next stage in the argument is to refute the suggestion that though the "inventors were bad, the thing for all that, may be good." This he does with much biblical and classical learning ; even the burning of the Ephesian books was a voluntary act on the part of St. Paul's converts and not the act of the magistrate. In the next section he points out some of the difficulties in the way of the enforcement of the order. To make it effective it must be made "according to the model of Trent and Seville, which I know ye abhor to do." He also insists on the qualities essential to a licenser, and the danger that "hereafter" they

* There is another passage in which he expressly excludes the Romanist and the Freethinker:—"I mean not tolerated Popery and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religious and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate—provided, first, that all charitable and compassionate means be used to win and regain the weak and the misled." Here again he has not the logical completeness of Roger Williams, who makes no exceptions in his claim for mutual and universal toleration of differing opinions.

† In Morley's excellent edition, included in Cassell's National Library, there is a curious misprint of "minorities" for "minorites." What Milton is suggesting is the parity of the chaplains and the friars whom he has named earlier.

may be either ignorant, imperious, and remiss or basely pecuniary." Then follows the proof as to the injury which licensing must do to learning, and the indignity it puts upon all scholars. "What is it but a servitude like that of the Philistines, not to be allowed the sharpening of our own axes and coulters, but we must repair from all quarters to twenty licensing forges." Milton speaks of the discontent of the Italians under the Inquisition, and mentions his visit to "the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner of the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." After further dwelling on the disadvantages of the order, the book ends with a peroration of long-sustained power that remains one of the greatest glories of our English literature.

"And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth to be put to the worse in a free and open encounter. Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing." In these two sentences Milton has compressed the whole of his doctrine—a generous and steadfast belief in the power of Truth.

There was further effort on the part of the Company of Stationers to bring Milton into trouble with Parliament. On December 9th, 1644, there was a complaint in the House of Lords of "a scandalous printed libel against the Peerage," and the Master and Wardens of the Stationers' Com-

pany were sent for and ordered to find out the author. On December 28th the Master and Wardens declared: "They have used their best endeavours to find out the printer and author of the scandalous libel, but they cannot yet make any discovery thereof, the letter being so common a letter; and further complained of the frequent printing of scandalous books by divers, as Hezekiah Woodward and Jo. Milton."* This, as Masson points out, was a clever device of the Stationers' Company to get out of their own difficulty by turning aside the attention of the Lords. The Peers directed that two justices should examine Woodward and Milton. That Woodward was placed under arrest is certain, but after examination he was released on his own bond. That Milton was either arrested or examined there is no evidence. His name does not occur again in this connection in the journal of the House of Lords.

Milton went on his way unmolested, and published 'Tetrachordon' and 'Colasterion' in March, 1645, both unlicensed, and the first dedicated to the Parliament. In the latter, Milton punishes Joseph Caryl, one of the Assembly of Divines, who in licensing a reply to the 'Doctrine of Divorce,' had gone out of his way to express the opinion that the anonymous author had "with good reason confuted" Milton. The 'Colasterion' is now remarkable for the violence of its language, and its personal abuse of Milton's unhappy opponent, who is metaphorically rolled in the mud and trampled down to its lowest depths. Controversial scurrility

* Masson's 'Milton,' iii, 293.

was one of the signs of the times, and Milton was not at all exempt from the contagion of the age.

What was the effect of Milton's plea for unlicensed printing? Technically it might be said to have failed, for the order was not repealed, but its practical result was a relaxation of strictness that excited the indignation of the Presbyterians. "I am afraid," said bitter Thomas Edwards, "that if the Devil himself should make a book, and give it the title 'A Plea for Liberty of Conscience, with certain Reasons against Persecution for Religion,' and bring it to Mr. Bachiler, he would license it, and not only with a bare *imprimatur*, but set before at the commendation of "a useful treatise" "a sweet and excellent book." Yet John Bachiler was one of the examiners appointed under the order! There were even pamphlets issued with grotesque or satirical *imprimaturs*.* Gilbert Mabbott found the business so irksome that he resigned the office in May, 1649. The most startling fact of all is that Milton was one of the licensers of newspapers throughout 1651 and a portion of 1652. But the censorship is easily explained, and indeed was in reality a case of editorial supervision. The official journal of the Republic was the 'Mercurius Politicus,' written by Marmaduke Needham, whose MS or proofs were submitted to Milton as Secretary of the Council of State.† It is not at all unlikely that some of the leading articles may have been wholly or partially from the pen of Milton. The Commonwealth, whose servant Milton was, had never been

* Masson's 'Milton,' iii, 433.

† Masson's 'Milton,' iv, 327—335.

induced to adopt his principle of a free press. The ordinance of 1643 had been followed by similar action in 1647, 1649, 1652, and 1658. In practice it had perhaps not meant more than the suppression of some indecent books and of pamphlets of the "killing no murder"* order.

Milton's plea for unlicensed printing had fallen upon the ears of a deaf generation. He stigmatises the enchaining of literature as a papal device; but all the States of Europe had claimed and exercised the power of suppressing all books that were distasteful to them. And the Protestant theologians, no less warmly than their Romanist opponents, had approved of the intervention of the State for the punishment of authors, and the confiscation of books containing what they regarded as blasphemies or heresies. The right of authority to prevent the publication of unwelcome views; the right of the majority to coerce the minority, and to reduce to silence the holders of obnoxious opinions was so generally admitted, that he who propounded the contrary view was certain to be regarded as an innovator dangerous to the commonwealth.

The invention of printing revolutionised the conditions of literature, and was followed by a more systematic fashion of guarding the members of the Roman Communion from books regarded as dangerous to faith or morals.† There had been

* Masson's 'Milton,' v, 352.

† For the history of censorship, reference may be had to Dr. George Haven Putnam's work on 'The Censorship of the Church of Rome and its Influence upon the Production and Distribution of Literature' (New York, 1906-1907, 2 vols.), and to the more elaborate work of Dr. Fr. Heinrich Reusch on 'Der Index der Verbotenen Bücher' (Bonn, 1883–

denunciations of particular books during the middle ages, but the first Roman catalogue of prohibited books was issued in 1557 by Pius IV. There had been previous lists issued by the University of Louvain and by other authorities, national or local. The theory of the Curia was that its condemnations were valid throughout Christendom, and everywhere binding on the faithful. But this was by no means accepted by the nations. Spain acted through its own Inquisition, and the prohibitions of Rome and Seville were not always identical. Venice, partly for commercial reasons, did not accept the Roman Index, nor did France, Germany, or Belgium. The earliest of the modern lists of forbidden books seems to be that issued in England in 1526, when Henry VIII was still an enthusiastic son of the Church. Between the beginning of the sixteenth and the close of the nineteenth century Putnam enumerates fifty-three distinct lists issued by popes, monarchs, universities, and inquisitions. The 'Indexes' are well known to the students of literature, and are remarkable both for what they include and for what they omit. In the prohibited books the Songs of Béranger, the speculations of Bentham, all the works of the two Dumas, Milton's 'Defence of the English Republic,' Dante's 'Commedia,' all the writings of Erasmus, and all the books to which he had contributed notes, were included. The 'Decamerone' was expurgated only by the omission of Boccaccio's attacks on the clerics. Aretino was

1885, 2 vols.). The modern methods are explained in 'A Commentary on the present Index Legislation,' by the Rev. Timothy Hurley, D.D. (Dublin, 1907).

obnoxious, not because of his gross indecencies, but by reason of his suspected heresies.

Sometimes tricks were played on the licensers. Thus, an admirer of Aretino, who wished to reprint his 'Filosofo,' issued it in 1650 under the title of 'Il Sofista,' and with the blameless name of Tansillo as the author! *

The Atlas of Mercator was prohibited, as were the Essays of Montaigne, and the writings of Francis Bacon. Richardson's 'Pamela,' Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe,' David Hume on the Human Understanding, and Mill on Liberty are among the books placed under ban. The 'Zoönomia' of Erasmus Darwin is prohibited, but none of Charles Darwin's are on the list. This is a curious omission, for various books in defence of his views have been condemned. In the same way Newton's name is not found in the Roman 'Index,' but a little manual on Newtonian astronomy, intended for the use of ladies, is duly forbidden. One result which can scarcely have been foreseen is that the Roman Index served as a guide to books which were obnoxious to the Curia

* 'Il Sofista...del...Luigi Tansillo' (Vicenza: per Giorgio Greco, 1650) —the disguised Aretino—is now a very rare book. Another instance is 'Il Cavallarizzo...del...Luigi Tansillo' (Vicenza: appresso il Brescia), which is really the 'Marescalco' of Aretino. It is curious also to note the anxious disclaimers of the dramatists. "Si protesta," writes Simon Grassi—and similar declarations are made by other playwrights—"l'autore di scrivere da vano poeta, e credere da vero Cattolico" ('Più Fatti, che Parole' (Bologna, 1719). Apparently even the official *imprimatur* was not felt to be a sufficient defence against possible charges of impiety. "Cortese lettore," says Pietro Antonio Rovislari, "se t'incontrarai nelle parole Deità, Fato, Destino, Sorte e altri simile, sappi, che chi scrisse hà sentimenti di buon Christiano, e è nemico acerrimo alla Scuola degl' Etnici. Riecvile dunque in buon senso, e considera che il tutto si dice per puro abbellimento, e scherzo dell' arte" ('La Sfinge lasciva,' Bologna, 1680).

and therefore presumably of value to Protestant opponents. Dr. Thomas James secured as many as he could for the Bodleian Library and published an Index of them in 1627. A condemnation is an advertisement as well as a deterrent.

The most debated action of the Roman authorities is the condemnation of Galileo. The doctrine that the sun was fixed and that the earth moved round, was denounced as a heresy by Paul V in 1616, and the 'Raccolta' of 1624 again prohibited all books teaching that doctrine.

In 1620 the Congregation decided that the writings of Copernicus could not be reprinted unless his theory were stated as an hypothesis, not as a conclusion. Galileo arrested, imprisoned, and threatened with torture for advocacy of the Copernican system, abjured "the error and heresy of the movement of the earth." It was not until 1822 that Copernican books were allowed to be printed in Rome, and not until 1835 that the Index was expurgated of its denunciation of the "heretical" theory that is now universally taught.

The policy of the Congregation of the Index did not differ greatly from that of Protestant States. The burning of Servetus will always remain a red blot on the character of Calvin. In 1554, when a reply to one of Calvin's tracts appeared at Basel, he demanded that its publisher should be punished. At the instance of Beza a book by Morrelli de Villiers was by order of the Synod of Geneva burned by the common hangman in 1562. Luther was zealous for the censorship and suppression of books against his doctrines.

Nor can it be claimed that in our own country the doctrine of the freedom of the press received practical acknowledgment at any early date. In 1526 the bishops were busy searching out and burning the writings of Luther, Tyndal, Huss, and Zwingl. In 1526 Henry VIII issued a list of eighteen books to be prohibited, and increased the number in 1529 to eighty-five. In 1530 he forbade the reading of the Bible in English, but revoked the order after his excommunication by the Pope. All the Tudors exercised the regal power for the suppression of books. The Stationers' Company formed in 1557 was an instrument in their hands, and had the exclusive right of printing and publishing. In 1559 the formal censorship was established by Elizabeth, when it was ordered that no book should be issued unless licensed by the Queen, six members of the Privy Council, the Chancellor of Oxford and Cambridge, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop and Archdeacon of the place of publication. In 1586 the Star Chamber allowed one press at Oxford and one at Cambridge, but restricted the licensing power to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. James I, who was no friend of liberty, had one of his books, a defence of the subject's oath of allegiance, placed on the Roman Index in 1609.

Laud's Star Chamber decree of 1637 forms an elaborate code for the stringent supervision of printing and for the licensing of books. The barbarous punishment of Leighton, Burton, Prynne, and other authors obnoxious to the authorities cannot now be

read without horror and disgust. During the Commonwealth the censorship, whilst often relaxed, was never abolished, and at the Restoration was made more stringent by reverting to the Star Chamber decree. It was renewed for two years in 1693. In that year Edmund Bohun, the licenser, gave his imprimatur to a tract entitled 'King William and Queen Mary, Conquerors,' which was sent him by an enemy, Charles Blount. The House of Commons thereupon ordered it to be burnt by the hangman, and imprisoned the licenser and also voted his dismissal from office. Blount issued 'Reasons humbly offered for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing' and 'A Just Vindication of Learning and of the Liberties of the Press,' which chiefly consist of matter from Milton's 'Areopagitica'—with a very scanty acknowledgment of the real author. When the time came for renewal in 1695 the act was dropped. What Milton's eloquence failed to do, was accomplished by the trick of Charles Blount and the stupidity of Edmund Bohun. Thenceforward the English author stood in the position for which Milton had argued. The English writer might publish his thoughts without let or hindrance, but was subject to the law of the land if his books were deemed dangerous to the State or morals. The law was not always wisely administered. The long series of prosecutions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are melancholy exhibitions of political and theological bigotry. It is even yet uncertain as to the limits within which discussion is permissible. The writings of the greatest lyrical poet of the last century were denounced

as blasphemous and immoral by a court of law.* Technically every bookseller who sells a copy of Shelley's poems is liable to prosecution, fine, and imprisonment, but prosecutions are attended with so much difficulty that there is with us a larger measure of practical freedom than in any other part of Europe. In the United States and in the British self-governing Colonies there are even fewer restrictions. It is not arrogance to claim for the English-speaking races the largest freedom the world has known for the untrammelled utterance of the thoughts and speculations of the human mind.

The lesson of history is that an effective political or ecclesiastical censorship is impracticable. The mere mass of modern literature makes due examina-

* The case of Hetherington *v.* Moxon by which it was decided that it is illegal to sell a copy of Shelley's works is curious. Henry Hetherington, as the seller of cheap radical and freethought papers, was the object of considerable persecution, and retorted by indicting three persons for selling Shelley's works. Moxon, as publisher, accepted the responsibility and was defended by Thomas Noon Talfourd, but in spite of Lord Denman's favourable summing-up he was convicted. As he was only ordered to come up for judgment when called upon, no punishment, except the heavy costs of the case, befell him. The jury, in a muddled and bewildered fashion, probably felt that as Hetherington had been punished Moxon ought not to escape. What Hetherington and his friends desired was an acquittal by which the press would have been freed. It has been said that Hetherington's action was "merely for the sake of vexation and annoyance," but nothing could be further from the truth. His desire was to secure the legal right of the freest discussion of political and theological topics. Talfourd's speech, which is a fine example of forensic eloquence, was printed by Moxon in 1841. The case is reported in the new series of the 'State Trials,' vol. iv. The history of the growth of the freedom of the press has to be written. W. H. Hart, in his unfinished 'Index Expurgatorius Anglicanus,' made a beginning, and Cornelius Walford has noted some early laws and regulations ('Trans. of Library Association,' Liverpool Meeting, 1883, p. 88), but there is a wealth of material in the State Papers, which has not yet been utilised. The liberty of to-day has been gained by the sufferings of many in the past.

tion impossible. Even if the examiners were infallible their labour would still be vain unless every reader could be persuaded to examine the Index of prohibited works before he opened a book.*

The machinery is too heavy to be worked. It is easier to condemn than to confute. Galileo was condemned, but he was not confuted, and the ban placed upon his teaching has had to be removed. But for two centuries the prohibition of the Copernica astronomy was a hindrance to scholarship and a denial of the truth.

It is often the poets who see the farthest and clearest. Milton's vision was keener than that of the statesmen of his day, and than many of those of our own day. "Give me," he says, "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all other liberties." There can be no real liberty without the liberty to think and to make known that which has been thought. Where this right is exercised all other liberties will follow.

Milton had faith in the power of Truth: "Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter."

This is in the same heroic strain in which the soldier of Darius held forth:—

"As for Truth it endureth and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. With her there is no acceptance of persons or rewards; but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things; and

* From a bibliographical point of view some of the 'Indexes' leave much to be desired in the descriptions of the books condemned.

all men do like well of her works. Neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness, and she is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth." And with that, says the ancient scribe, he held his peace. And all the people then shouted, and said, "Great is Truth, and mighty above all things."

ON THE CONCEPTION AND TREATMENT OF SATAN IN 'PARADISE LOST' AND THE 'INFERNO.'

BY EDWARD HENRY PEMBER, K.C., M.A.

Outside the work of Shakespeare modern Europe has produced three poems of the very first rank. Two of these are epics, and the third, though dramatic in form, is still epic to some extent in instinct, and altogether in dimensions. In each, one and the same personage, under variant names, is a prominent, indeed, almost the predominant figure. Lucifer, Satan, Mephistopheles, are one Devil individually conditioned; one model under differentiating suits of clothes. My intention was at first to compare all these three presentations of the Prince of Evil, but on reflection I have preferred to eliminate the Mephistopheles of Goethe. And this for a reason which may savour of pedantry, but is nevertheless defensible. The first two are Christian, and are so constructed in good faith; the third is not so. To the author of 'Faust' Mephistopheles was little more than an individualised adaptation of a conventional device, a theatrical property; at the most, an outworn and discarded myth, taken up, re-clad, galvanised for the purposes of a new drama. Goethe as little believed in a wandering Devil, regnant in a physical Hell, as he did in the Heavenly Hierarchy who sent down a detachment of Angels to carry off the soul of the repentant Margaret.

To him Satan, Raphael, Gabriel, Michael, were mere figures in a vast stage machinery, no less than were the Sirens, Witches, Giants, Gnomes and Nymphs, along with Helena, Phorkyas, Nereus, Sphinx, and other mythologic and diabolic impersonations of the second part of his great play.

But both Dante and Milton were eminent products of a living Christianity, and to each of them the Devil was a cardinal feature of his faith. Their Evil One was not a device, but a dogma; and it is in their handling of him, as the impersonation of a dogma, that he is of interest to us at the present moment. So, as Milton and Dante differ in this respect from Goethe, and form a pair of specifically similar believers, let us set the great German apart, leave him, but with respect and reverence, to his modern Paganism, his Pantheistic aloofness, and compare—it will be no lengthy process—the conceptions of his Catholic and Protestant antecessors.

It may seem strange to us that Dante, who wrote three centuries and a half before Milton, and whom, as a Mediæval Catholic, we might expect to find following tradition with more punctilious orthodoxy than a later and heretical Protestant, should have strayed further than Milton from Hebraic legend. But it is an undeniable fact, which a brief glance at Biblical statements and allusions will make clear.

Throughout the Old and New Testament the Devil figures as a personage free to dwell where he pleases, and to act as he will. But this licence is always taken as accorded by the Creator, whose agent he is, and as withdrawable when its purpose is answered. The conditional freedom, however, is there, and the agency

is there; and, to take no earlier instance for the moment, both are pre-eminently demonstrated in the famous scene with which the noble poem of Job opens. The Sons of God, presumably Angelic Couriers of Divine Orders, on a certain occasion present themselves before the Lord, and Satan comes among them. When he is asked whence he comes, he answers, "From going to and fro in the Earth, and from walking up and down in it." Here is freedom of locomotion quite unstinted. Among the notable things which he has seen are the virtues and the great fortune of Job. He cynically declares the former to be merely a consequential appanage of the latter, and forthwith receives a commission to put his calumnious attribution to the test. Here is agency. Nowhere else, perhaps, in the Bible is this limited free-will of the Evil power with its subordination to the Good, so clearly and dramatically set forth.

The mystical passages in the 12th Chapter of Revelation exhibit a different conception—that of a great Apostate Angel, under the form of a Dragon with seven heads and ten horns, who draws away a section of the heavenly population after him in rebellion, and whose defeat and ejection are witnessed by the Seer of the Apocalypse. The consequences of his arrival upon Earth are made to point to the future rather than to the past, albeit he is identified as "that old Serpent called the Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world." The fall of him and his Angels is treated as an event coincident with the vision. For on its occurrence a loud voice is heard to say:

"*Now* is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ. . . . Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. . . . But woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! For the devil *is* come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

This undoubtedly points to evil then begun and thence to grow, as does the subsequent persecution, in the same chapter, of the "woman who had brought forth the man-child."

We must not forget, as striking yet a third chord, the two mystical references, derived I know not whence, in the Epistle of Jude. The first occurs in verse 6, and is to "The Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation," and whom God is said to have "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." This undoubtedly points to some archaic myth, probably of Semitic growth, with which Jude supposes his readers to be familiar. But what we have to observe is that no exception is here made from those who are thus kept in chains, and one is left to suppose that Satan was so kept with them. And this would be consistent with what we shall have to notice presently in Dante's treatment of him. But on the other hand it is inconsistent, not only with the narrative in Job, but also with Jude's own subsequent statement in verse 9 of the same epistle. He there says that "Michael the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said,

'The Lord rebuke thee;'" just as the Angel of the 3rd Chapter of Zechariah, who stands to support the High Priest Joshua, whom Satan is opposing, is made to say, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; . . . is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

The authenticity of the Epistle of St. Jude and of the Apocalypse of St. John, along with their relative dates, are matters of lofty controversy, and it would be idle to speculate whether St. Jude had seen the narrative of his brother apostle's vision, or whether both writers drew for the assistance of their imagination from common and variant sources. But the statements of both are equally curious, and, in spite of discrepancies, point towards the antiquity of a myth upon the subject of a schism in Heaven, which was the first manifestation of evil, even if all that we have been told of it leaves the origin of evil undeclared and unexplained.

On the other hand, the well-known incident in the 22nd Chapter of the First Book of Kings almost seems to suggest the concurrent and independent existence of good and evil agencies, without any disruption of the Angelic Hierarchy. When Micaiah the son of Imlah is consulted by King Ahab as to the advisability of the expedition to Ramoth Gilead, and is, in effect, also asked to explain the falseness of the counsel of the other prophets who had spoken before him, he says:

"I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, 'Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?' And one said on this manner and another said on that manner. And

there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord and said, 'I will persuade him.' And the Lord said unto him, 'Wherewith?' And he said, 'I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And he said, 'Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth, do so.' Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee."

But the first, and I suppose that we ought to say the principal, Biblical scene in which Satan is always considered to figure is the temptation of Eve in Paradise. It is very questionable whether he does. Of course, whenever any personage in a myth is the agent in an untoward or malefic episode, it may be said with complete facility, and in one sense with truth, that the Spirit of Evil is present and active. But this is to interject modern method and theory into an unconscious and rudimentary narrative. The story of Eve's temptation and fall is told with all the good faith of an unquestioning fabulist. Its method is common to all mythologies. It simply marks a period of human development, during which human speech, human passion, wit, affection, antipathies, mischief, and guile, displayed occasionally in the brute creation, were marvels possibly, but marvels, not only conceivable, but receivable. We must not forget Balaam's ass.

To the narrator of the particular story which we are considering the serpent was in all reality a beast of the field, more subtle than its fellows. It was also malicious and malignant, with a dislike of man. Further, it was quite aware of the peril within reach of which a certain command of their

common Creator had placed the human occupants of Eden. The catastrophe we all know. The successful serpent has his share in the common condemnation of all the actors in the drama:

"Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; and I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Without probing fancifully into the depths of the legend, we may at least suggest its composition at an epoch when human beings had learned by experience that a snake was poisonous, and apt to bite them in the foot, and when they had grown used to knock it on the head whenever they got a chance of anticipating the action of its fangs. But the identification of the Serpent with the Author of Evil, owing to a temporary metamorphosis, is obviously the work of a later genius. It is gloss and commentary, of which voluntary self-transformation is the earliest, and the allegories of St. Jude and St. John are the latest phase.

But between the tragedy of Eden and the birth of Jesus Christ the conception of the evil element in the universe, and its impersonation in Belial, Beelzebub, or Satan had become matured and crystallised in the Jewish mind. It is beside our present purpose to speculate as to how much of the Hebraic Satan was derivative and how much home-grown. The early philosophies of the other great Asiatic races were all quarries from which the Semitic Palace of Evil might have been hewn and reared. It is enough

for us that in the result we find our Biblical Satan established at large upon the Earth, and so far a free agent, as in the first pages of the New Testament, to dare a renewal upon the august and impregnable person of Jesus Christ, an assault akin to that in which he had been made to fail against the noblest type of Semitic humanity which the grandest of Semitic poets had been able to conceive.

Now let us see how faithfully and how far the author of 'Paradise Lost' has followed the Hebraic model. His Satan is a rebel Archangel condemned beyond redemption; the avowed, implacable enemy of his vanquisher, yet left by him at large, to wander to and fro upon the Earth, and to work his own hostile will within those vast spaces of opportunity which the infinite purpose of Omnipotence has designedly left open to him. We ought perhaps rather to have spoken of him as escaped and strayed, for we do not forget that the poem opens while the crushed hosts of the rebel angels are still wallowing unreleased in the burning lake of Hell into which they had been hurled. It is not necessary to analyse the machinery by which Satan makes his exit from Hell and commences his career of disturbance and destruction upon the destinies of Man. I suppose that we could all write a tolerably correct "Argument" of the Twelve Books of 'Paradise Lost.' It is enough to note that Satan becomes the rapid and successful seducer of Adam and Eve, and that his great Lieutenants in the Celestial War, and with these, all the rank and file of the army which had followed his fortunes, are made his colleagues and creatures in the meaner operations of revenge to be

carried on through man indirectly upon man's maker. Let me quote the passage in which Beelzebub deploys the project :

> " What if we find
> Some easier enterprise. There is a place,
> (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
> Err not) another world, the happy seat
> Of some new race called Man, about this time
> To be created like to us ; . . .
> . . . So was his will
> Pronounced among the Gods, and by an oath
> That shook Heaven's whole circumference, confirmed.
> Hither let *us* bend all our thoughts, to learn
> What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
> Or substance, how endued, and what their power,
> And where their weakness, how attempted best
> By force or subtlety ; . . .
> . . . Here perhaps
> Some advantageous act may be achieved
> By sudden onset ; either with Hell fire
> To waste his whole creation, or possess
> All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
> The puny habitants ; or, if not drive,
> Seduce them to our party, that their God
> May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
> Abolish his own works. This would surpass
> Common revenge, . . .
> . . . When his darling Sons,
> Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
> Their frail original, and faded bliss,
> Faded so soon."

So they ; but Satan is hardly well started on his voyage from Hell to Earth before the Omnipotent, who, for all his licensed freedom, holds him and his designs in the hollow of his hand, is already un-

folding the future to his Son. The scheme of the temptation, fall, and damnation of man is propounded. So also is his ultimate forgiveness:

> "Man therefore shall find grace,
> The other none; in mercy and in justice both,
> Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel;
> But mercy first and last shall brightest shine."

Let us now a little more systematically trace through the earlier books of 'Paradise Lost,' the elaboration of Satan's character and his position from the outbreak of his rebellion to his too successful attack upon the progenitors of the human race. We are told almost at the outset of the poem that—

> "His pride
> Had cast him out of Heaven;"

that—

> "He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
> If he opposed, and with ambitious aim
> Against the throne and monarchy of God
> Raised impious war in Heaven."

and thereupon, that—

> "Him the Almighty Power
> Hurled flaming headlong from the ethereal sky
> To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
> In adamantine chains and penal fire."

Nobody who has read the magnificent 'Prometheus Bound' of Aeschylus can fail to be reminded of the war between the Titans and Zeus for the possession of Heaven. There is in it the same hapless contest with fate and omnipotence, the same

overthrow, the same condemnation, the same undying hate and spite of the vanquished, ready to be outpoured upon the blameless human race. I am tempted to quote a few lines describing the fate of the Titan Typhos, and put into the mouth of Prometheus, an eye-witness of the catastrophe:

> "So also have I seen, and pitying seen,
> Him, the Earthborn, impetuous Typhos, deep
> Beneath Sicilian caverns sent to dwell.
> Dire, with his hundred crests, his aspect was,
> Portentous; and though now o'erthrown, he once,
> Hissing forth slaughter from his monstrous jaws,
> Faced all th' embattled Gods, while from his eyes
> Gorgon-like lights came flashing, as he stood
> In act to wreck the monarchy of Heaven.
> But him the ever-wakeful bolt of Zeus,
> With thunder swooping, in a blast of flame
> Struck down, astonied at the very height
> Of his proud vauntings; stricken to the heart,
> Charred, blasted, in his ruined strength he fell.
> Now, prostrate, powerless, near the narrow seas,
> Crushed 'neath the roots of Etna, lieth he;
> And o'er him upon high Hephaistos sits
> Where ring his glowing forges; thence one day
> Shall break forth flaming torrents to devour
> The smooth expanse of fruitful Sicily.
> Such rage, though calcined by the bolts of Zeus,
> The Titan still hath force to vomit forth
> In hot insatiate floods of fiery surge."

It is not until we reach Book V of the poem, with its lengthy talk between Raphael, Adam, and Eve in Paradise that we get the full elaboration of the Satanic character. The archangel, who has been sent down to warn the man and woman of the

machinations of their enemy, tells them how at a certain epoch, not apparently very remote,—

"As yet this world was not, and chaos wild
Reigned where these Heavens now roll, where Earth now rests
Upon her centre poised."

At such a time the whole population of Heaven was summoned to hear from the Father an astounding announcement; and these are the words in which Milton clothes it—

"This day have I begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed; your Head I him appoint;
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heaven and shall confess him Lord.
. . . Him who disobeys
Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day
Cast forth from God, and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness deep ingulphed, his place
Ordained without redemption, without end."

The rejoicing in Heaven was general, but not universal. Satan, who is admitted by Raphael to have been—

"Of the first,
If not the first Archangel, great in power,
In favour and pre-eminence,"

sees his position gone from him, and so,—

"Fraught
With Envy against the Son of God, that day
Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
Messiah, King, Anointed, could not bear
Through pride that sight, and thought himself impaired."

That very night he planned with Beelzebub his great rebellion. All the "Myriads" under their joint command are summoned, professedly—

> "To prepare
> Fit entertainment to receive our King,
> The great Messiah, and his new commands."

But, all the same, before the assembly takes place the seeds of discontent and treason have been carefully sown. The concourse, the proposal for armed resistance to the association of the Son in the splendours of omnipotence, along with the single-handed loyalty of Abdiel, and his scornful retirement from the traitor host, are details too well known for reproduction. But what have we here presented to us? The origin of evil? No. Its first appearance? Yes. All the theories of the co-existence of good and evil from the first dawning of oriental mysticism downwards are left untouched, unrefuted no less than unadopted. We start in Heaven with the unfallen Archangel and his followers, just as we start on earth with the innocent Adam and his progeny to be. So far they are analogous. Just as the Almighty is made to say that Adam and Eve had been created—

> "Sufficient to have stood though free to fall,"

so is He made to say of the Angels:

> "Such I created all th' ethereal Powers
> And spirits, both them who stood, and them who failed;
> Freely they stood, who stood, and fell, who fell."

It is almost impossible to over-rate the epic power shown in the conception of the Miltonic Satan. It is one of the chief splendours of the poem, if not the chief. Perhaps its relative success was to be expected. Human powers fall back beaten, just as Satan was beaten by Omnipotence, in an attempt to portray perfection. However magnificent may be the failure, it is failure none the less. We all yearn for a conception, of the possibility of which we are discontentedly conscious, but as to the realisation of which we are certain that it has never been approached. On the other hand, finite greatness and its presentment, when achieved, we can and do recognise. To this point Milton rose, and to this point he carries us with him. It is only when he fails before the impossible that our dissatisfaction begins. He makes us see that Satan was the most magnificent attendant who stood among his peers at the throne of the Ineffable. Jealousy begets treason in him, and treason ruin;

"Warring in Heaven 'gainst Heaven's matchless King,"

he falls; but he is made to become neither weak nor despicable. Hateful he may be, beaten he is, but as another poet puts it, in language worthy even of the pages of 'Paradise Lost,' when speaking of the ambitious soul which strives to achieve the unachievable, he fell—

> "Even as the mountain cataract,
> Which, having leapt from its more dazzling height,
> E'en in the foaming strength of its abyss,
> Lies low, but mighty still."

According, then, to Milton, Satan, unlike Dante's

Lucifer, did not stay long "in adamantine chains and penal fire." He and his chief lieutenant, Beelzebub, soon rouse themselves from the torpor of their stupendous fall, which is said to have left them—

> "As far removed from God and light of Heaven
> As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole."

If in the words quoted "centre" means the centre of the earth, and "utmost pole" means either the north or south pole of the Earth's axis, it is clear that the distance covered would only be thrice the half of the Earth's diameter, in other words, twelve thousand miles. Enough, in all conscience, but, astronomically considered, something altogether trivial. But the astronomy of 'Paradise Lost' is very hazy. The mobility of the heavens and the fixity of our globe are both pretty clearly asserted, and it is quite possible that Milton, when he wrote his poem, may not have shaken himself free of the still orthodox Ptolemaic theory. Kepler had only died in 1630, and Galileo in 1642, and although Copernicus had asserted the two-fold motion of the earth a century before, the new Cosmogony was not widely understood, still less universally accepted. Newton, although born in the year of Galileo's death, had still to set the stamp of his genius upon the revolution of science. But this is a divergence from our subject.

The situation and structure of Milton's Hell differ altogether from Dante's inverted cone in the centre of the Earth. With Milton, Hell is a fiery globe, hanging alone, and far away from Earth, on the

other side of Heaven, in what we should now speak of as interstellar space. Satan himself is made to say of it:

"Long is the way
And hard that out of Hell leads up to Light;
Our prison strong; this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night receives him next,
Wide gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he 'scape into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers and as hard escape!"

Again, when Satan, Sin, and Death all stand together at the newly-opened gates of Hell, we are told that—

"Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep; a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension."

This is chaos, the anarchic terrors of which are splendidly portrayed. It is not part of my purpose, however, to cite the passage. But we are told that—

"Into this wild abyss the wary fiend
Stood, on the brink of Hell, and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; . . .
. . . At last his sail-broad vans
He spreads for flight; . . .
. . . thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but that seat soon failing meets
A vast vacuity."

In other words the surging smoke of Chaos had buoyed him up, supplying a resisting atmospheric medium which his wings could cleave. But when it failed he found himself in the interstellar ether, which, if it were a substance at all, was so attenuated as to give his wings no purchase. Whether this be scientific or no I know not, but Milton says it, and gives its consequence :

> "All unawares
> Fluttering his pinions vain, plumb down he drops
> Ten thousand fathoms deep; and to this hour
> Down had been falling, had not by ill chance
> The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud
> Instinct with fire and nitre hurried him
> As many miles aloft; that fury staid
> Quenched in a boggy Syrtis neither sea
> Nor good dry land."

The Fiend stumbles on over this, with wing and foot, half striding, half flying, till he reaches the Court and Capital of Chaos and his sable-vested consort, Night. That "Anarch old" recognises him, and being made privy to his errand and to the motives of hate, revenge, havoc, and ruin which actuate him, sees his own occasion in it all, and the possible revendication of his own diminished frontiers, and so directs him on his way to Earth, now not very far off. Satan sets forward once more, and—

> "At last the sacred influence
> Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
> Shoots far into the bosom of dim night
> And glimmering dawn."

At that point, his journey being thenceforward easy, he—

"Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off th' empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, . . .
. . . once his native seat,
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain
This pendent world; in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude, close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursed hour he flies."

The details of his arrival upon Earth, his deception practised upon Uriel, his contemptuous leap over the wall of Paradise, and his detection by Ithuriel and Zephon, "squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve," are, once more, details on which we need not dwell. But it is of interest to us to cull from the narrative one or two phases which bear on the poet's conception and treatment of the personage whom most of us are half persuaded to call his hero. While Satan is being brought up to him as a captive by the two Angels whom I have named, Gabriel himself says:

"I hear the tread of nimble feet
Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;
And with them comes a third of regal port,
But faded splendour wan; who by his gait
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell,
Not likely to part hence without contest;
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours."

As the interview between the two great Archangels proceeds, Satan is made less and less repulsive. Though he gives enmity for enmity, scorn for scorn, there is something designedly pathetic in the

way he appeals to Gabriel for sympathy in his desire to escape from the gloom of Hell, and to seek elsewhere for something like a mitigation of pain. On the other hand, we see through his falseness when he admits his presence near the couch of Adam and Eve, but deprecates the suspicion of any ill intent ;

> "They found me where they say,
> But that implies not violence or harm."

At the close of their angry dialogue, when an appeal to arms seemed imminent between the two champions, and—

> "the angelic squadron bright
> Turned fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns
> Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
> With ported spears,"

Milton allows no qualification in the majestic attitude of their foe ; he tells us :

> "On the other side, Satan, alarmed,
> Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
> Like Teneriffe or Atlas, unremoved ;
> His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
> Sat Horror plumed ; nor wanted in his grasp
> What seemed both spear and shield."

And it is not until he is shown the Golden Scales, with his own kicking the beam, hung forth in Heaven to pronounce the vanity of his resistance, that he—

> "looked up, and knew
> His mounted scale aloft ; nor more, but fled
> Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night."

The scheme, then, of 'Paradise Lost' is to establish Satan with as much range of freewill and unchecked action in what I have called the lower warfare between him and the Almighty, upon the changed theatre of the mundane universe, as is compatible with the over-ruling purposes of the Creator. His state is analogous to that of any other form or force of spirit or matter, conscious or unconscious. He energises according to the constitution of his being within the limits of supreme necessity. So do the minutest known sub-divisions of the material atom, electrically impelled, move and counter move; so, the bombinating grain of radium exults in its activity; so, the revolving meteorites, packed or solitary, hold their seemingly wayward and divergent courses; so, comets rush along orbits whose excentricities only savour of caprice. But Milton never loses sight of the triumphant calm of an Omnipotence from which neither Man, Devil, nor any other living organism, nor any other constituent in what we call, somewhat rashly perhaps, inanimate matter, from an Ion to a System of Stars, is free. The Devils are left to walk the Earth, to scheme, to tempt, to triumph, but their schemes and their victories are not their own. These are all but as stones laid in an infinite edifice, which is none of their designing, and upon which they are put to work, a band of enslaved and tortured artificers, keenly alive indeed to the lash, though only half acknowledging their own slavery.

Whatever may have been the theoretic belief of Dante as to the origin of Evil and Satan's share in its later manifestations, few, if any, traces of either,

so far as I can push my memory, are to be met with in the 'Inferno.' We find the Sovereign of Hell permanently imprisoned in the lowest deep of his own dominion. He lies, half embedded in ice and rock, at the apex of the inverted hollow cone of which Hell is made to consist. He crouches silent, inactive, impassive, just as he may be supposed to have reached his dungeon after having been hurled out of Heaven. This is the only indication of how he came where we find him. There is no attempt, as in 'Paradise Lost,' to drape his form with the relics of a marred beauty. He is gigantic still, but no longer angelic. He more resembles the Aeschylean Titans, Typhos, Briareus, or Enceladus than ought else. His size is all that he has in common with the Miltonic Satan. Ingenious computations of Dante's Commentators have brought the height of the monster to some 3000 or 4000 feet, which, though less than, is still comparable to the stature assumed by Satan when, at the crisis of his dispute with Gabriel, as we have seen, he,—

> "Collecting all his might, dilated stood
> Like Teneriffe or Atlas."

But Dante's portraiture discloses no trace of latent compassion for its subject. Here it is:

> "The sovereign of the dolorous realm rose up
> Mid-breast above the ice; his arm so huge
> That I come nearer to a Giant's height
> Than Giants to the length of that one limb;
> Judge ye how vast the whole of that sunk form,
> Duly proportioned unto such a part,
> If so it were, upreared, must needs have shown.

How great a marvel it appeared to me
To see three faces on his head; in front
Blazed one vermilion-red; the other twain
Met this from either shoulder, and the three
United at his crest; tawny the right,
Or white with tawny mingled, and the left
Was such to look on as are those which come
From that dark region whence the Nile is poured.
Below each one there sprang two mighty vans
Of spread befitting to so vast a bird;
I never saw a sail upon the sea
Of span so broad; plumeless were these, in form
And fashion as a vampire's; and all six
He beat continuous, so that three great winds
Streamed from him everlastingly, of force
To keep Cocytus frozen; with six eyes
He wept, and from his chins a constant stream
Of tears and bloody foam ran trickling down.
Within each mouth the jagged teeth were set,
Like those wherewith the Tuscan peasant tears
His flax stalks, and in each a sinner writhed
In agony, the while with crunch and claw
Their flesh lay bared: 'That soul,' my Master said,
'Whose head thou seest not, but only limbs
That quiver, is Judas called Iscariot;
The worst-tormented he; the others hang
With heads exposed; from the black snout depends
Brutus, who writhes in silence, and the third,
Looming so large of limb, is Cassius.'"

This is the sole picture which we have of Satan in the 'Inferno.' Of his subordinate Archangels, the heavenly companions of his rebellion, we see nothing at all. The twelve Devils of the Twenty-first Canto, who are under the chieftainship of Malacoda, are in no sense Biblical. They are

independent Demons of the later classical type. All the other spiritual agents, Gorgon, the Centaurs, and such like, are monsters also drawn from Greek or Latin mythology. The Judge who condemns sinners is Minos, the Conductor of the Lost Souls is Charon, and the boundary of the Nether World is Styx. The office of the Evil Ones is simply to marshall or to torment, and it is performed entirely within the various circles of Hell. There is no suggestion that any of them is either called upon or permitted to range abroad.

Nor is there any reference to suffering of their own. They are exhibited as agents of the Power of Evil, not, as I gather, necessarily Satan; they play the part of torturers and jailers from an innate love of mischief and cruelty, and have naturally gravitated to a service in which they will have never-ending gratification arising from aggravated misery and inflicted pain.

In accordance with all this, we hear nothing of Satan or the other rebel Angels as tempters of man. At the opening of the 'Inferno' Dante might have elected to describe his own moral sloth and spiritual backsliding as due to the handiwork of Satan. But on the contrary, he ascribes them to the three master passions of Lust, Ambition, and Avarice, which he clearly treats as constituents of his own nature, though he impersonates them in the three Beasts who strive to divert him from the ascent of the "Delectable Mountain."

On the whole I am inclined to sum up the distinction between the Lucifer of Dante and the Satan of Milton in this way. They are both pre-

sentations of the Author of the same Celestial rebellion; but Lucifer is treated solely as the archetype of transgressors, punished by perpetual and unrelieved incarceration; while Satan, over and above his treason, is made the original and present transmitter of sin and misery to the children of men. How evil arose in the once sinless soul of the Archangel himself neither poet has attempted to explain.

MILTON AND THE GRAND STYLE.

BY PROFESSOR GEORGE E. B. SAINTSBURY, M.A., LL.D., D.LITT.

I NEED hardly assure you that I have no intention of making the title of this paper an occasion of reviving the great Arnoldian battle on the question "What *is* the grand style, and who, exactly, are the poets entitled to be credited with it?" This question—unsettled in fifty years and unlikely to be settled in five hundred—complicated, moreover, by Mr. Arnold's special definitions and applications, would be most inappropriate to the present occasion. But it is not inappropriate—it is, on the contrary, most appropriate to that occasion—to deal with a different and hardly contentious side of the matter. The Grand Style, in its widest and highest sense, may be said to include those forms of expression—in our present connection those forms of *poetic* expression mainly, though not excluding prose—which are specially suitable to what, from the famous treatise whose authorship is still debated, we call "The Sublime." To do this it must possess characteristics akin to the Sublime itself. It must go beyond the commonplace and the prosaic in the bad sense; it must stop short of the bombastic and the extravagant. Now it is practically admitted by all but paradoxers and crotcheteers, or persons

honestly, but unfortunately, deficient in the necessary literary sense, that Milton possesses this style, whosoever else may or may not possess it, and whatsoever conditions it may or may not be reasonable to attach to the grant of the possession in general. It is the purpose of this brief paper to enquire into some of these conditions under which he seems to possess it—in particular to see how he is distinguished from others who also admittedly possess it, by relinquishing or adopting certain means for its attainment—to endeavour in short to discover some of the characteristics of *his* grand style in the concrete, avoiding the perilous and rather unnecessary question what may be the characteristics of *the* grand style in the abstract.

Of the characteristics that are certainly his, the most obvious are naturally the most important in one way, the least in another. They are most important because they, more than anything else, have coloured the general conception of the Miltonic quality, and because they have been usually imitated by those who have followed him. They are least important because they, almost of necessity, produce only an external and superficial grandeur or grace. Yet they certainly, even putting the imitators and the general aside, are not to be passed over lightly. That great critic whom I shall still take the liberty of calling Longinus, admits among the five sources or fountains of the Sublime something which his translators render very variously, but which, translated as closely as possible, comes to this "the quality of the writer's handling of *figures*—figures of speech as well as figures of thought." Now one

is sometimes tempted to a slight impatience of the introduction of these apparently mechanical things, which, indeed, are in ancient criticism nearly as much of a nuisance as certain catchwords—varying, of course, from time to time—are in modern. But this impatience may be—perhaps all impatience always is—unwise. Longinus was the very last critic ever to submit to the merely mechanical; and infinitely insubordinate as the free human spirit is in details, it cannot help obeying certain general forms in its operations which, in this particular sphere, may be called figures if anybody pleases. They may be called by many other names—by many other names men actually do call them—as, for instance, when they do not like them "mannerisms," "tricks," "rhetorical devices"—when they do like them "secrets of art," "masteries of craftsmanship," and the like. That they exist—exist eminently and prominently, almost flagrantly—in Milton, nobody would dream of denying. And though I do not propose to invite your principal attention to them they cannot be quite passed over. For they certainly have to do—have a very great deal to do—with the Miltonic style: and if the Miltonic style is even only one form of the grand style, nothing that has to do with the Miltonic style can be thought altogether alien from the grand.

Take, for instance, such a well-known thing as the habit—as old as Chaucer, but brought to a pitch of prominence and perfection by Milton—of employing two epithets and putting one before and one after the noun, as in "cany waggons light," and "sad occasion dear." This is a figure beyond all

question—it might almost be called a figure with a vengeance, for at first sight nothing can appear more arbitrarily mechanical, more purely tricky. "What can it matter," says the plain man who prides himself on regarding all consideration of such things as pedantic fiddle-faddle "whether you put the epithets together, or apart, or before, or (except that it is unusual) after." Well, perhaps there is no reason: though this "perhaps," is, only to be granted for the sake of argument. The fact remains that it does matter—matters very much. And, perhaps again, that "unusualness" is one of the reasons. Perhaps there must always be something of unusualness in the grand style: not merely Longinus, but Aristotle, who is not generally supposed to have been a patron of the eccentric and the bizarre, thought so. When Wordsworth, and Mr. Arnold himself, argued in the opposite sense, and quoted certain great passages in their favour, they forgot that usualness may be unusual—familiarity unfamiliar—if the poet knows how to make it so. But that is something of a digression. It is certain that "cany waggons light" is not the usual arrangement—that it is very effective—that, in the context especially, it does help the sublimity, the grandeur, the consummateness-in-the-circumstances, of the style. For "consummateness *in the circumstances*" is, I think, about as safe and probable a definition of the indefinable as may be in the case of our grand style. Nor, if anyone thinks "Chineses" and their "waggons" too slight for such a style, can he find the same fault with "sad occasion dear" or with many other exercises of this

well-known device. Like all such devices, it can be abused: and like most of them it tempts the imitators to abuse it. Nothing is more common in intentional or unintentional burlesques of our poet: and especially when it is combined with a travesty of his Latinisms, it can be very terrible. Perhaps never did a true poet in a great poem admit such a deformity as the "excoriate forks deform" in Cowper's 'Yardley Oak.' But we all know that the best things, misused, become the worst.

Another well-known and still commoner device, actually efficacious in producing the sublime, possibly so in producing something almost ridiculous, is the Miltonic apposition. Nothing can be finer or more effective than this in such cases as

"And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old."

But the parodists seized on it at once: and there is nothing more effective in another way than the adjustment of it to the purposes of parody in 'The Splendid Shilling,' and all its best successors:—nothing less grateful than some serious abuses of it by Thomson and the other mid-eighteenth century writers "in the manner of Milton."

For this is the danger of all mechanical or merely physical things—that their use or abuse, their beneficent or maleficent effect, does not lie in themselves. The flame will torture and disfigure and destroy as readily as it will give light and warmth: the steel will take the life of the innocent as effectively and as ruthlessly as that of the guilty. Another ancient critic, with less soul in him than

Longinus, but with about as much sense as ever critic had (Quintilian), observed that it was sometimes hard to distinguish faults from figures of speech. Nothing is more certain that it is exceedingly possible, and exceedingly easy, to use figures so that they shall be faults. Yet they remain a "source of the sublime" as well as a source of other things down to the ridiculous: and I should not wonder if the famous "one step" adage suggested itself to the first person who used it, in direct connection with this habit of regarding figures as sublime-producing machinery. Yet Milton could certainly make them so: he did make them so in these and other instances which it would take too long to enumerate, and which would be absolutely impossible to describe or discuss on the present occasion. Perhaps, indeed, no author would have been more eagerly seized upon by Longinus himself to justify his inclusion of this source of sublimity.

Let us go a step higher. There will, I suppose, be very little dispute about the extraordinary *lift* given to Milton's style by his power to handle, and his constant handling of language in a way less "mechanical" (since we have used the word) than that just discussed; hardly mechanical at all, some would say, and I should agree with them; but still a matter of pure style. This is his selection, his moulding, his collocation of phrase and rhythm so as to clothe the verse with the fullest accompaniment of poetical music. I am not now proposing to enter upon any matter strictly prosodic. I know that there are a good many people who do not want to hear about such matter at all: and I have endea-

voured to say what I have to say, to people who do want to hear about it, elsewhere. The Johnstones and the Maxwells, the Caravats and the Shanavests, the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians of Miltonic prosody may agree heartily on the point with which I am now occupied. Here at least Milton avails himself of the most *obviously* mechanical means of producing grandeur and grace less than almost any poet of whom we have record except Shakespeare. Nobody can put Dante higher than I do; in a moment you will see that in some respects I think Milton his inferior. But there can be no doubt that Dante owes a great deal to his happy selection, once for all, of the inter-rhymed tercet. Of course he has brought out the virtue of it as no one else has done: but that virtue is, as in the case of some other metres, to a great extent, intrinsic and *immanent*—at your command but not exactly *you*, or given by you. The same is the case with the Spenserian, with the *In Memoriam* metre, with rhyme-royal—perhaps with others. You have got to be the magician to set the spirit at work: but when it does work its accomplishment is, to a certain extent, its own and not yours. Now there is no spirit in the whole range of the poetical hierarchy more potent than blank verse: but its potency is the least automatic of all, the most dependent on the continued guidance and commands of the poet himself. And he must give this guidance and these commands not merely by way of estimable subject and worthy moral idea. What a chain of "extremely valuable thoughts" will come to in blank verse when no care is taken to lighten it by phrase and rhythm, and

word-music, and word-colour—what a mere galley-slave load of rusty iron it becomes, Wordsworth himself has taught us only too well. I have never doubted that Milton's determination towards blank verse, and before that final determination his selection of the curious "rhymed blank verse," as it has been called, in which he clothed perhaps his greatest single and moderate-sized poetical achievement—'Lycidas'—was the result of his consciousness of and his confidence in his powers. He knew that he could manage phrase and rhythm in the grand manner so as to suffice for the attainment of a consummate poetic style. It was an adventure in the fashion of those romances, the blessed paths among which even his elder feet never forgot, though they might actually sometimes wander in worse places—a gage to hold bridge or pass without shield or helmet, with sword only or only spear, as against the full armour of other poets. That he did it, first with only a modified and very limited use of rhyme and a vague and indefinite one of stanza, then with neither stanza nor rhyme at all, everybody knows; how he did it, at least in great part, I have no doubt. It was by the grandeur and grace of style obtained mainly, if not wholly, through the means which we are now more particularly to notice.

For myself, I should want, outside of Dante and Shakespeare and Aeschylus and Lucretius, no better example of the grand style in poetry than 'Lycidas' itself. For variety of grandeur, I do not think you can find any passage of equal length in the 'Paradises' to match it: and if the selection surprises anyone I fear he must be under the delusion which,

according to Schlegel, someone was witty enough to ascribe to Burke—that "the Sublime is a grenadier with very large whiskers." Even the too famous outburst of sectarianism—to which I have the strongest personal objection as a matter of history and opinion, and which some of the stanchest of Milton's admirers have admitted to be an error of taste and art—seems to me, for all that, not to lose grandeur of form. And why? Because the supremacy of expression and phrase and verse remains—the discord and the declension, even to those who find them such, are in the sentiment only.

I do not know whether anyone has ever been rash enough, or perverse enough, to attempt to "set" 'Lycidas.' He would deserve penal servitude for life with two barrel organs playing different tunes, out of time, under the windows of his cell—if only for the utter superfluity of his naughtiness. Even if, *per impossibile*, a musical accompaniment could be composed that should not jar with the piece, it must necessarily drown, or at least draw attention from, the poetical music which this grandeur of style gives and includes inevitably in itself. We know from the Cambridge MS what pains Milton took with the composition in the smallest details: and we know likewise that his alterations and selections of alternative were (what is by no means invariably the case when poets alter and select) almost always decided improvements. All of them, I think it may be said without rashness, tend in the direction of still further exalting this grandeur of style by word and sound-arrangement, colour, out-

line. In one of the very grandest passages of all, one of the most perfect phrases in English poetry—

> "Sleepst by the fable of Bellerus old
> Where the great vision of the guarded mount
> Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold"—

we know, for instance, that he had at first written "Corineus," a name just as good in itself as "Bellerus," well known to most of his probable readers in the fables of the chroniclers who had the monopoly of the history of England, but, as it happens, concerting, symphonising, less well with the rest of the passage in sound. So he justly coined "Bellerus" from "Belerium," and gave him an extra *l* "for love and for euphony" as a christening gift.

There are other points about this triplet too well known for emphasising, now and here in particular: but it may well serve as text for a few words on that mighty engine of grandeur of style in the use of which no one has ever surpassed Milton—the employment of proper names. No device of his that touches style is more celebrated; none, perhaps, has been more violently disliked by those who cannot taste him. His conscious reasons for adopting it may be variously guessed at. There were the concurrent examples of the ancients whom he revered and the mediaeval writers whom he really loved —for there never was, in all literature, such a blend of Classic and Romantic as Milton. There was the foible of the age—and not a bad foible either—for the putting in evidence of learning—for giving, as it were, key- and catch-words which brother students might recognise, and which might awake in them, as

in himself, pleasant trains of association and remembrance. There was the delight in a wide survey of times and countries, of looking back to the famous men our fathers that were before us—of knitting his own literature to the literature of Spenser and Arisoto, of Dante and Petrarch, of all the great poets and prosemen of ancient times. But the master inducement must have been really, whatever it was consciously, the power and beauty of the words themselves—the combination of attractive strangeness, freedom from vulgarity, and intrinsic harmony. You will never find Milton bringing in an ugly name: he would have agreed with Boileau there, though he would have had nothing of Boileau's arbitrary and finical notions as to what was ugly. And so he scatters the light and colour and music of these names all over his verse—seeming to grow fonder and fonder of the practice as he grows older, from the consummate but not lavish examples of it in 'Lycidas' itself down to the positive revels of nomenclature—geographical, mythological, romantic—which are to be found in 'Paradise Regained.'

But Milton does not depend on these "purple stripes that give brightness to the dress" things that, as such and in the phrase just used, even the sober taste of Quintilian approved. His "common vocabulary"—a 'common' which is made so uncommon,—is as grand as his "proper," and the grandeur is by no means always achieved by unusual diction in individual words, though it sometimes is. His oddities of spelling—"sovran" "harald," "murtherer," and the rest—conduce very little to it, if, indeed,

they are not something of a drawback, as freaks of this kind always are. But his selection of words and his arrangement of them are simply consummate: and nothing could better illustrate and confirm the famous doctrine of Longinus that beautiful words are the very light of thought, or the still more audaciously thoroughgoing principle of Dionysius of Halicarnassus that you can trace the source of beautiful style right down or up to beautiful *letters*. Let us open—it cannot be opened too often—our 'Lycidas' yet once more. It is true that there is such a blaze of the grand style all through it that it is difficult to isolate any particular ray: or rather to select any particular ray for isolation and analysis. But the difficulty only arises from their number, and the unbroken succession of them. Take almost the earliest—that of the second line. He wants to tell us that myrtle withers and that ivy is evergreen. It is not all-important, but it is connected with the theme and not a mere decorative addition; it is worthy of the grand style, and it has it—

"Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere"

summons to its mere contrast of natural fact the aid of the most cunning contrast of vowel sound and arrangement of rhythm. Look down a few lines and find the phrases which tip each line for four running—"*lofty* rhyme," "*watery* bier," "*parching* wind" "*melodious* tear." "Oh," says the objector, "anybody can pile on adjectives." Yes: but can anybody pile on *these* adjectives? In a certain other school the "*gradus* epithet" is a well-known ornamental addi-

tion. You can often, if not most often, take it away without spoiling the sense, or substitute half a dozen others without much affecting that sense. Here you cannot. "Lofty" keys on directly and almost inevitably to "build" which has come before; "watery" is necessary to the occasion, "parching" independently of its value as sound is wanted as a contrast to "watery," and "melodious" tear is hardly a mere epithet at all. It expresses "tears *with* melody"—the melody of lament and regret. That is how the grand style uses epithets: and how the *gradus* does not suggest their use.

Again, alliteration, it sometimes has been held, is a childish thing—perhaps worse—a foolish and tawdry bedizenment. Is it? Try, for instance, such a phrase as—

"The swart star sparely looks."

Try it without the alliteration—

"The fierce star rarely looks."

Try it with the adverb which Milton himself once thought of substituting—"stint*ly*"; try it with anything but this cunning variation of the same "s" alliteration with a different subsidiary consonant and the almost more cunning selection of the different values of the same vowel. Your ear, if you happen to possess one, will tell you of the heavy change.

Try "the *embattled* mount" (an excellent phrase in itself) for "the guarded mount" in the passage cited above. Cut off—

"Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore"

(it is not needed in sense) from the verse paragraph to which it belongs and see what *that* change does. Roll over on the palate of your mind such expressions as "*Clear* Spirit," "*Broad* rumour." Weigh, measure, adjust to each other, and consider the adjustment of such words as the constituents of the line—

"To scorn delights and live laborious days."

You will begin, I suspect, to think more nobly of the Dionysian "beautiful letters" than to hold them the mere "rhetoricians' tools" which they have often been considered: and you will estimate them at their due worth as constituents, in their turn, of the grand style. And if contrast is wanted, take what some, I believe, have considered an exquisitely pathetic passage—what is truly and genuinely pathetic in substance—from a poet whom Mr. Arnold, while exalting him above all but the first two of our poets, pronounced to have no "style at all"—

"The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide,
But there was neither sound nor sight,
To serve them for a guide."

As pathetic as you like in substance: perhaps (it is no matter, but it may be mentioned) expressing a more genuine, certainly a deeper sorrow than that of Milton for King. But of the grand style nothing—intentionally nothing if you please, but nothing.

Yet let us, according to the ordinary classification, go higher again. According to the ordinary

classification, I say, for that classification is not mine: and among the mysteries of "the written word which conquers time" I do not know one that is higher or lower than another. But that is not the general estimate: and I dare say some who hear me think long till we come to what is commonly called substance or matter and leave mere form—though we shall find it difficult to do that in discussing any kind of style, grand, medium, or low. But we can shift to some extent from the arrangement of words to their meaning: or to more of the meaning and less of the mere arrangement. In this plane of consideration there is certainly nothing which contributes more to the grandeur of Milton's style than what Macaulay (in a contrast with Dante, which is, perhaps, more well meant than happily expressed, and which, I believe, Mr. Courthope has recently treated) calls his "dim intimations"—what may be perhaps more happily called the "Miltonic vague." With his usual love of the sharpest antithesis Macaulay himself has selected from Dante examples which, certainly not grotesque in the original, are made to appear somewhat grotesque in the citation and translation. There is no need to do this, and in fact it is a mistake in criticism to do it: for grotesque necessitates preciseness of a peculiar kind. You may see this in another art by contrasting Blake who, with all his extravagance, is scarcely ever or almost never grotesque, with Cruikshank, who is never anything else. But though grotesque requires precision there is not the slightest necessity that precision should be grotesque. However, let us leave that side of the matter.

It is certain that among the few undoubted practitioners of the grand style Milton stands almost alone in this "dimness" this "vagueness" of his—it is indeed one of his most Romantic characteristics. Perhaps in some cases it may require a certain amount of reflection—at any rate a certain amount of comparison—to appreciate its extent and peculiarity, for Milton does not by any means shun description or the use of apparently descriptive epithets. From 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' through 'Comus' and 'Lycidas' to the 'Paradises' and on to 'Samson' he has abundance of it. In fact, I am not sure that I do not myself *see* Harapha and Dalilah in 'Samson' more clearly than I see almost any other of Milton's personages. I use "see" in its strictest sense. His presentation of personage and place and circumstance is always intellectually sufficient; but the "mind's eye" with which they are contemplated is not the one that Hamlet meant. Indeed, in Hamlet's sense, I doubt whether there is a "visible" person in Milton. Eve once comes pretty near it, and there is a plausible biographical gloss which explains that. But I see Virgil always, at least in the 'Inferno,' much more clearly than I generally see her. There are touches of the visual appeal in Sin; and I think Milton meant to make Adam as clear as Palma il Vecchio has made him to the eye; but the very fact of this characterises his style of literature in its absence of result.

It is perhaps, however, in places and scenes rather than in persons that this peculiar vagueness emerges most strikingly, as does the opposite quality in his greatest rivals. One can see and could find one's way

about the Cave of the Nymphs with the greatest ease, and if I am ever fortunate enough to reach the Earthly Paradise I shall know exactly where to look for Matilda, and almost exactly what she will look like. It may be my fault, but I can see nothing with this same distinctness in Milton. It is, I dare say, known to not a few in the present company that an ingenious lady thinks she has exactly identified the scenery of 'L'Allegro' and its companion, with a Swiss not an English landscape. For myself, I should certainly say that Milton has endeavoured to give, and has very well succeeded in giving an English landscape, but that the landscape's original might be anywhere in England, at least between Trent and the Channel, Severn and the North Sea; that it is much more everywhere than anywhere in particular. It is the same with the wood of 'Comus,' and the same with much of the beautiful but not strictly *focussed* scenery of 'Lycidas,' where, by the way, the finest thing of all is the vast vague prospect over the Atlantic waves, in the very lines so often quoted. There is one particular picture in Dante to which I know absolutely nothing similar in Milton; I refer, of course, to similarity in kind not in particulars. And that is the great passage of the Gate of Purgatory, with the first stair of flashing white, and the second, cross-riven, of sullen blue, and the blaze of blood-red porphyry above, and the sworded angel in the ashen cloak sitting on the threshold itself, his feet on the crimson step. I do not remember any actual picture of this, but I see it as if Rossetti had painted it for my mantelpiece. The nearest thing in Milton is, I suppose,

the discovery by Ithuriel. We have all seen pictures of that, but they do not "realise" Milton to me.

Now it would be, of course, not only possible but easy to give a dozen reasons—from tolerably plausible to utterly fantastic—why Milton does not attempt *pictura* as well as *poesis*. That he could not have done it is not, I think, one of these. I hardly know anything that Milton could not have done—except, perhaps, be humorous. You may, if you like, urge national tendencies: but there is the unfortunate fact before you that Spenser, as good and pure an Englishman as Milton, and in a manner his master, is almost the most pictorial of poets, with numerous others, from Chaucer long before him to men happily still alive, to keep him in company. You may say it was Puritanism: but you will find that very difficult to adjust to numberless things in the poems from the earliest to the latest, from the landscape of 'L'Allegro' through the great flower-piece of 'Lycidas' and the hospitality really shown to Raphael in 'Paradise Lost' to that delusively offered to Christ in 'Paradise Regained.' Milton has not the slightest shrinking from varied colour, even from voluptuous and luxurious detail. But he never combines it with all the definiteness of the arts of design: it is always left to the vaguer suggestiveness of one variety of literary handling. As I have hinted, we know so many illustrations to Milton that it may be hard to realise this, but even here there is a lesson waiting for those who care to learn it. There *are* many illustrations to Milton, but there are few that satisfy or even please his thorough admirers.

But is this abstinence from precise colour and form an impediment in the way of reaching the grand style? Most certainly not, though the indulgence in it is as certainly, an excellent means thereto. Perhaps there is hardly even in Dante a passage achieving this grand style better in the varied and elaborate fashion than the one just referred to. This brings under contribution almost as many sources of the Sublime as ever flowed on Ida, from the appeals to the mental sight just particularised to others not less remarkable of the audible kind. The great words *ammassiccia* and *fiammeggiante* we may be sure such a word-artist as Milton, and such a student of Dante himself, must have envied his master. But the grand style is the Rome of styles: and all roads lead to it as to the other Eternal City.

The Miltonic vague is not only no drawback, it is almost the central strength and source of the grandeur of the poet's style. Macaulay was right there: however much he may have been out in his actual contrast with Dante. Nor is it at all necessary to have recourse to the peculiar character of Milton's subject as excusing what requires no excuses, or necessitating what, if the poet had chosen to do so, could have been avoided. It is sufficient that this vagueness was the method which he preferred, to which he was best adapted, which he exercises with most success, and which, when he deserts it, brings him sometimes nearest to failure. It is his element: he is *monachus in claustro* with any kind of restriction: and his powers are multiplied thirty fold when he gets to the infinite or at

any rate the comparatively boundless. There cannot be much less definition given to the visual idea than in—

"All night the dreadless angel, unpursued"—

even the lines which follow adding very little. And yet if these six words do not substitute an example of the grand style I shall acknowledge my own unfitness to treat of the subject. While if I must, if only as an illuminative contrast, undertake the ungracious office of pointing out what is *not* in the grand style—I have only to go a score or two lines lower in the same context and find—

"And thou in military prowess next"—

which I do *not* think grand. You see Milton wanted to confer upon the Archangel Gabriel the very definite post of second in command, which Dante would have expressed as definitely. But he preferred to paraphrase and periphrase it into something less definite, and well! did not quite succeed.

How magnificently, on the other hand, this quality of vagueness has stood him in stead elsewhere it is scarcely necessary to take up time by instancing. It is difficult to conceive anything more suitable to it than the journey of Satan from Hell to Paradise: and it is at least possible that if he had relied on it more exclusively—he has actually used it with consummate effect—in the Sin- and Death-scene, he would have avoided some of the condemnation with which that scene has been visited, not merely by the adversary and the entirely miscomprehending reader, but by some weak brethren. The form of wide

expatiation and Pisgah-sight which this vagueness takes, noticeable as has been said as early as 'Lycidas,' if not earlier, becomes more and more so as he goes on, and supplies nearly all the finest passages except—

"'Tis true I am that spirit unfortunate"

of 'Paradise Regained.'

But it is an entire mistake to suppose that this aspiration after space or rather no space, required corresponding range of subject or scene in order to show itself. It is not only Dr. Johnson who has either taken for granted or mistakenly argued that the poet of 'Paradise Lost' could not be a good poet in Sonnet. As a matter of fact the Sonnets are among the chief places for the Miltonic mastery of the grand style, and by no means only where they call in some of the special devices just referred to as in—

"Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,"

where the last three words give one of the greatest examples of the separation of epithets so much dwelt on. The grand style retains and maintains its grandeur in the most varied subjects. You see it—see it indeed in remarkable perfection—as early as the 'Ode on the Nativity:' the famous stanzas on the silencing of the Oracles have this particular gift in such a measure as had been possessed by no one earlier in English except Shakespeare. You have it in the curfew passages of 'Il Penseroso' with the "source" of the wide horizon specially drawn upon: and in many others of that poem and its twin. 'Comus'

is a most interesting blend for the more serious grand style achieved irregularly in the earlier part, and the lighter grand style achieved inevitably in the later. As for the Sonnets the better of them at least are saturated with it. Such a phrase for instance as—

"The milder shades of Purgatory,"

especially in its actual place, is an instance which may, at first sight, seem to lie outside the majestical range of the grand style, but will be found well within it when examined. Of 'Lycidas' we have spoken, and the 'Paradises' are simply full of it by common consent. But perhaps there are few more interesting, though there may be more delectable, places of study for it than 'Samson Agonistes.' We have here, to some small though certainly to no great extent, what Longinus wrongly thought he saw in the author of the 'Odyssey'—the spectacle of a great nature slowly and slightly senescent—not indeed turning to the childish in any way, but with its joints a little stiffened, its arteries faintly touched with sclerosis. The grandeur is almost increased: but the grace has waned a little. It is plate armour rather than mail—heavier, less elastic, less shot with varied colour. Yet it is still great and of the greatest: it has lost nothing of the lion's ramp, though something of his spring. And if you take it with the earlier forms it exhibits a range of its own possibilities which few others have ever achieved; and which, though certainly not coextensive with that of the grand style itself—to be that

would be to be coextensive within the range of possible literature—holds a great part of the field with undisputed grasp.

The peculiar importance of the grand style to blank verse is a matter too obvious to require lengthy treatment, but too intimately connected with our subject to escape some notice. When Dr. Johnson laid it down "that if blank verse be not tumid and gorgeous it is crippled prose" the truth which is always to be found in Johnsonian statements, however much it be warped and wrested by prejudice is simply this necessary connection or need of the grand style. Now, of course, the "tumid and gorgeous" is merely a mistaken imitation of the grand. It is, indeed, so far possible to agree with Johnson as to hold that the writer of a long poem will take blank verse for his vehicle at his peril, however artfully he may manage it, and however fully he may avail himself of its capacities of variation in foot and pause. The few people who do read Southey now know (as Macaulay in one of the happiest examples of his not always happy criticism prophesied that they would) that the many who do not read him are unwise. But even these few can take little pleasure in his blank verse long poems. Landor's blank verse pieces of length are hardly more readable than those of his friend on the opposite side of politics; and this is all the odder because Landor was actually a master of the grand style in short phrases and detached pieces of verse, and in prose almost without that limitation. Only Milton can keep supplies of it ready for the long journey through the rhymeless desert. It is wonderful that

they threaten drought so seldom. It would be uncritical to say that the waterskins never run dry.

But if anyone should say, as is so often said with more or less of impatience, "These are all beggarly elements. Why do you not come to the great thought and the great subject which are the only begetters of the grand style?" I shall respect his sentiments, but demur to his principles. It is, indeed, impossible that the grand style should exist without great thought and great subject: for the very reason that it is of the essence of the grand style itself to make every thought that it embodies, every subject that it touches, great. But unfortunately the converse is not true: and it is perfectly possible and even not uncommon for great subjects to be treated—even for great thoughts to be expressed—without any grand style at all. To deny this would be to take a strangely pessimist view of humanity and of life *a priori*, and to neglect the facts of both *a posteriori* with a sublime carelessness, or a not quite so sublime obstinacy. Milton, it is true, chose great subjects: but so did Blackmore. Milton's thought is great: but I do not think that it is greater than Wordsworth's who possessed the grand style very rarely and who—as Mr. Arnold has put it, perhaps, too sweepingly without any provision—certainly very often had no style at all, or a style the reverse of grand. The fact is that there are few things in this world that are not great if greatly handled: and that it is only by obstinately darkening the cottage of the soul that you can quite exclude the light of the great thoughts that these great things offer you. But expressing them—but

handling the subjects greatly—*that* is quite another thing. To not many has that power been given, even once or twice in their lives; to few often; to none but the very elect of the elect with any constancy. The prophet himself saw the glory of the Lord before he could express it: and could not express it when he saw it. It was only when his lips had been touched by the coal from the altar that the power of expression came. That power of expression, in things mundane, is the grand style: and I have been trying to put before you some of the coals from the altar—things, let it be remembered, in themselves only ministerial, not part of the glory itself nor even of the offering, nor identical with the incense that they kindle, yet without which the smoke cannot fill the temple and the sacrifice cannot be consummated.

Gul. Faithorne ad Vivum
Delin. et Sculpsit.
Joannis Miltoni Effigies Ætat: 62.
1670.

MILTON: HIS RELIGION AND POLEMICS, ECCLESIASTICAL AS WELL AS THEOLOGICAL.

BY THE REV. H. G. ROSEDALE, D.D.

Any endeavour to define the religious views of Milton is to attempt the capture of the most elusive prey. No thoughtful person will believe, for a moment, in the persistence of any one series of stereotyped opinions during the whole of an active and deeply thoughtful life. Milton, like most other thinkers, was not one man but many, though thorough and consistent throughout; and to him who asks, What was Milton's opinion on this or that point? we answer, Which Milton, and at what period in his life?

Take, for instance, as illustrating the wide divergence between the Milton of 1629 and the Milton of 1649, his written declarations as to the Second Person of the Trinity:

"That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
Wherewith He wont at heaven's high council-table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,

Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.
Say, heav'nly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?"

Ode on the Nativity.

What could be more in accord with the orthodoxy of his day? Now we turn to his 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine,' a work which, in all probability, could not have been written until some twenty years later. In that work he says:

"Christ therefore agrees with the whole people of God, that the Father is that one and only God. For who can believe that the very first of the commandments would have been so obscure and so ill-understood by the Church through such a succession of ages, that two other persons, equally entitled to worship, should have remained wholly unknown to the people of God, and debarred of divine honours even to that very day? Especially as God, where He is teaching His own people respecting the nature of their worship under the gospel, forewarns them that they would have for their God the one Jehovah whom they had always served, and David, *i. e.* Christ, for their King and Lord (see Jeremiah xxx, 9). In this passage Christ, such as God willed that he should be known or served by his people under the gospel, is expressly distinguished from the one God Jehovah, both by nature and title. Christ himself therefore, the Son of God, teaches us nothing in the gospel respecting the one God but what the law had before taught, and everywhere clearly asserts Him to be His father (see S. John xvii, 3: xx, 17). If, therefore, the Father be the God of Christ, and the same be our God, and if there be none other God but one, there can be no God beside the Father."

This surely, and especially in the sixteenth century, would have been considered unorthodoxy?

When, at the initiation of the Council of this Society to whom the Crown has committed the important work of watching over the cultivation of literature, we have before us the work of reconsidering in the light of modern thought and recent investigations the character of this brilliant star in the constellation of English writers, we should be doing scant justice to so great a mind were we not to attempt to understand the meaning of these seeming contradictions from the pen of so upright and sincere a man. Let us follow him, step by step, in the gradual development of those ideas and experiences, which at each period of his life led to utterances in prose or verse, which, however enigmatical in places, have tended so greatly to enrich the beauty and dignity of our language—writings which have played no small part in moulding the ideas of generations gone by.

Much of the power of Milton's work is due to the fact that there is so much of himself in what he writes. The words are beautiful and dignified, the arrangement pleases, and his classical knowledge is ever to the fore, but one never loses sight of the man himself—he seems veritably part of his writings. If this be so, the process of tracing the evolution of that spirit, and of attempting to understand the meaning of the life of so great a man, may prove serviceable.

For simplicity's sake, let us divide the life-experiences of our author into three stages—though it is obvious that any such division must be purely arbitrary, and will represent only approximately the ideas intended.

To know Milton we must surely look to his heredity as one of at least three main influences in the causation of all that will have to be considered. His grandfather was a bigoted Romanist, and his father, coming under the influences of the "new learning," became an equally bigoted Protestant and Puritan. These two forces are, of course, really one, and will indicate to us the intensity, the forcefulness, and the dogmatic spirit which should be looked for in the son and grandson respectively. Environment and experience have also their part to play. I regret that we do not know more about Milton's mother, but there cannot be much doubt that Miss Caston, afterwards Mrs. Milton, was a true specimen of the Puritan wife of that day, occupied in doing her duty to the best of her ability, and inculcating in the minds of her children the principles of piety and virtue. That she probably occupied no dominating position in the home may, I think, be fairly gathered from the estimate of women which is so clearly brought out in the life of her son, and which was characteristic of Puritan ideals. What, then, were the outside influences on the boy, the youth, and the developing man? Like his home surroundings, they were entirely Puritan and dogmatic, an environment likely in so vigorous a nature, to intensify "feeling," which grows stronger by repression. Can we not well imagine the passionate-natured boy, first of all coming under the influence of the quiet, somewhat silent, but earnest Puritan preacher, the Rev. Thomas Young, who had been selected as his tutor, no doubt, in consequence not only of his intellectual ability, but also for the very strong Puritan prin-

ciples which he held? With such companionship, the first ideas of responsibility would develop in the young poet's mind. As he imbibed instruction from the man whom he could not help respecting and admiring, he would also absorb some of his teacher's religious principles, and in such a way as to make them his own, and in consequence more, far more, permanently his own than if he had merely received them with the rest of his parental instruction. When, too, the much-loved tutor became the victim of persecution, the appalling injustice of the act would tend to make the young man, in ardour of youth, feel, more than ever, the glory of becoming a partisan in a cause which was being so cruelly persecuted. This was not all, for on going to St. Paul's school he came under the mastership of the Rev. Mr. Gill, whose knowledge and zeal were both accounted considerable in his own day. The boys well knew that their master, in his book, entitled, 'The Trinity of Persons in Unity of Deity,' was the champion of the orthodox party against the Arianism of the period, as promulgated by Thomas Manning.

On leaving school, Milton went to Christ's College, Cambridge, where the strongest ecclesiastical and dogmatic influences seem to have been brought to bear upon the undergraduates. After completing his course there, and taking his B.A. degree, it is not surprising that his first works should be intensely orthodox and conventional, though full of love, passion, sentiment and aspiration.

Who else, but a young man in the passion of youth and idealism, could have written the words I

have already quoted? Who else, indeed, could have written the 'Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity'? Nothing shows us better the spirit of the young poet, who has just taken his degree and is settling down to what he believes to be the great work of teaching the world.*

Before reaching the age of thirty he had written 'Comus' and 'Lycidas,' works which carry the strongest possible internal indication of the passionate admiration of the young man for the beautiful, the pure, and the good, and which inevitably make one feel that as yet no doubts had entered his mind, so that nothing short of an almost Laudian orthodoxy would have been tolerated by Milton in this, the first stage of his career.

The exquisite beauty of character of the Lady in 'Comus' seems to me the high-water mark of Milton's early manhood. Though prevented, both by his hereditary tendencies as well as by his temperament, from entering into many of the ordinary interests and pursuits which were common to other young men of his time, yet he could not so far restrain the very humanity of his own being, as not to muse tenderly, and, I believe, passionately, on the ideal woman dwelling deep-seated in his own breast. A nature like Milton's could not expect to find many equals, nor many kindred souls, especially at such a time in English history, and in consequence we have to picture him at Cambridge more or less isolated; but this isolation shows us also a man who

* Heinrich von Treitschke, the illustrious German critic, says that the hymn on the Nativity leaves to us the best impression of Milton's youthful tendencies.

is beginning to criticise and to take exception to the conventionalism of the men of his own day. No doubt the quarrel with his tutor, William Chappel, Laud's tool—"a man of dry and meagre nature"—did much to increase his distaste for high and dry Anglican theology, but it was the unreality and hypocrisy of the religion of his colleagues at Cambridge which did more to make him search for truth beyond the range of the accepted teachings of the day.

The following letter to Alexander Gill, the son of his old schoolmaster, is interesting as indicating his bent:

"Cambridge, July 2nd, 1628.—. . . With us here, I know it to be the fact, that there are scarcely any who, ignorant and illiterate as they are in philology and philosophy, do not pounce unfledged upon theology; satisfied to skim lightly even that study, gathering, perchance, as much as may suffice for a declamation, stuck together in any manner, and patched, as it were, with the cast-off rags of others; so that it is to be feared that the monkish ignorance of a former age may gradually settle on our clergy. As I can find almost no companions in study here, I would go at once to London, had I not thought of spending the summer vacation in an entirely literary seclusion, and to bury myself in the cloisters of the Muses. . ."

Shortly after completing 'Comus' Milton went abroad, and visited Italy and France. That visit bore abundant fruit. The memory of the aged Galileo, the plots against his own life, as well as the general enlargement of his intellectual vision, gave to his subsequent works much of their beauty and value. Immediately on his return from Italy

he was thrown into the vortex of political excitement and controversy. Those were strange times, when few really knew what to think, or what to do! Into the midst of this turmoil, Milton threw himself. I have little doubt that at this period he wrote numerous tracts that we have never seen and never shall see; but those which are extant indicate two things most clearly: the ever-passionate Puritan spirit, together with the hatred it bore for tyranny of any external kind, and the absence of all heterodoxy in the poet. We almost hear the echo of his schoolmaster's theme, when, in his tract on the 'Reformation in England,' published in 1641, he says: "Witness the Arians and Pelagians, whom we take for no true friends of Christ." Speaking, too, of the General Council of Nicea, convened to denounce the Arian heresy, he invokes the "One Tri-personal God," whilst in another place he laments the dangers that may accrue from the use by Christians of Arian hymns and prayers, indignantly asking: "Should he move us who goes about to prove an unparity between the Father and the Son?"

How truly like the man we know, this is! Yet, strong, nay, almost violent as is his language on this and on other subjects, a reaction was not far off.

"There are some men," says Mr. Rawlings, "who set out to advocate ideas which they suppose themselves to hold as very truth, but in the process have changed them, thus giving the impartial onlooker a higher standard by which to gauge the meanness and poverty of the original." These are words of wisdom, and apply most truly to Milton; they

illustrate the justice and honour which were his most prominent characteristics, and which led him to review carefully his religious tenets. The earliest signs of a change came after his marriage. I therefore close the first period of the poet's life, about 1642, a year before that event.

In the second period of his life it is more difficult to trace the progress of his mind, for there are many influences to take into account. The effect of his first marriage, the political disturbances of that agitated time, the unwisdom and often the cruelty of the bishops, and especially of Archbishop Laud during that period, all, doubtless, strengthened the tendencies produced by his early Puritan training. They goaded this independent thinker to throw over all the trammels, whether good or bad, which were associated in his mind with a corrupt court and a degraded hierarchy. We may gather something of Milton's opinion of the clergy from an entry by his own hand in his 'Common-place Book':

"The Clergie, commonly the corrupters of kingly authority, turning it to tyrannie by thire wicked flatteries, even in the pulpit, as An: reg: Rich: 2 and 21, Stafford, Bishop of Exceter, in Parliament time. Which was cause of great mischef to both King and Country." Milton's 'Common-place Book,' p. 182.

The opinion, however, which any thoughtful reader will form of the character of so great a man, will not permit him to suppose that these alone could have had the effect of changing the current of his philosophical and spiritual thoughts. To a man of such high abilities, only the views of those

for whom he could entertain some profound admiration and respect could effect this, and we may fairly conclude that he received the necessary impulses from a study of the numerous and important works which he pondered over and devoured. His love and devotion to books is well known, insomuch as next to the housing of his own person (preceding in importance that of wife or family), came his books. During his visit to Italy he not only became acquainted with Galileo (and no doubt through him with many important works, notably the writings of Tasso, which, during his stay in Naples, he came to know and appreciate), but also with many other Italian writers. It has been suggested, not without some degree of reason, that he may have been influenced by Sylvester's 'Du Bartas,' and also by Spenser, Giles, and Fletcher, as Dr. Müller, of Berlin, following on Dr. Moolhuizen, has ably demonstrated. Homer, Virgil, and Ariosto were well known to so omnivorous a reader, whilst the works of Vondel were undoubtedly read by him in the original Dutch, though I see no reason for supposing that he quoted in any way from this writer. With such an enlarged range of thought, we can well understand how impossible it must have been for Milton, after his return from his travels, to look at life from exactly the same narrow standpoint that had satisfied his earlier years.

From several allusions in his 'Common-place Book' I am forced to the conviction that the majority of those entries were made before the year 1642, and where those entries were made later than this date the fact is always abundantly clear. Granting this

date, we find Milton, even at so early a period as prior to 1642, putting down for his own guidance a sentiment which he afterwards developed almost too extensively, a sentiment which was doubtless the outcome of his travels and his reading, under the heading:

"*De religione quatenus ad Rempub: spectat.*" Milton writes in his own hand: "Opiniones hominum de Religione opportere in Repub: vel sub bonis principibus liberas esse; quos dum laudat Machiavellus inter coetera bona inquit, videbis subiis tempora aurea, dove ciascuno può tenere et defendere quella opinione chevuole. discors L. I. c. 10." Milton's 'Common-place Book,' p. 197.

Just at a time, when the direction of his mind was towards a greater liberty in thought and action, Dr. Ames gave to the world a book which had considerable notoriety, entitled, 'Marrow of Sacred Divinity.' This treatise was published by special order of Parliament, as "a work useful for the season." Those who are acquainted with it are aware of its feeble and worthless character, yet politics and party feeling clothed it with a value wholly imaginary. So unsatisfactory an attempt to bolster up the narrow views of the bishops and clergy of the period, seems to have disgusted Milton to such an extent that he resolved to find a more rational basis for the religion of Christian men in his day. I have little doubt that the much-debated work entitled 'De Doctrina' was written as an antidote to Dr. Ames's 'Marrow of Sacred Divinity'; this largely will account for the rapid change of views which seems to have taken place in Milton's mind

between the writing of his tract on 'Reformation,' or that entitled 'Animadversions on the Remonstrant's Defence,' and such heterodox works as his 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce,' or the work known as 'De Doctrina.' Doubtless the efforts made by the Bishops to have him punished for the former led to the non-publication of the latter, and to the promulgation instead, of the work, to which he gave the name 'Areopagitica.' This was in reality a plea for the freedom of the Press, which at that time did not exist. I do not ignore the suggestion that will naturally be put forward, that the work on 'Divorce' was entirely the consequence of the unhappy relations between himself and his first wife. Such doubtless was the cause of the publication of this tract, but no amount of personal discomfort can account for the religious beliefs which actuated Milton at that time. It will not, I think, be suggested even by his detractors that he was capable of putting forth to the world a statement of belief which he did not really hold, or which he held lightly. The transparent honesty of the man is far too widely recognised for us to accept any other view than that between 1643 and 1645, for some reason or other, Milton had probably come to believe that the greatest freedom in the matter of divorce was the real teaching of the Bible. No amount of self-interest could have persuaded him to publish the views he did, had he not been sincerely convinced that in them he was expressing the true teaching of the Holy Scriptures. It is, however, not difficult to see that the whole trend of his thoughts at that time, the disgust he felt for the narrow and fettering ideas of Dr.

Ames's work, the hatred he bore the Church of Rome, to whose door he attributed the marriage laws, and last, but not least, the thought of his fellow men being subjected to distress similar to that which he was experiencing from an unworthy wife, may have led him to react too far in the direction of antinomianism. Thus much seems agreed, that after his return from Italy, and certainly after 1643, the year of his marriage, there is a marked contrast in the views which underlie his writings. This change probably found its climax in the work on 'Christian Doctrine.' Though the book was not published in his lifetime, much of the teaching in this volume reappears in a more matured and scholarly form in the poet's later works, and, in spite of Bishop Creighton's opinion to the contrary, I am disposed to believe, to some small degree, even in 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained.'

With the 'Restoration' Milton entered upon the third period of his life. Almost an outlaw, comparatively poor, hated of the ruling powers in the land, the butt of enemies, and neglected by many an old friend—worse than all, blind, and bereft of the wife he had really and devotedly loved;—all this, and the fact that the sorrows and perplexities of the intervening years had given him ample time to reconsider some of his extreme positions, tended to produce for us the strong man whom sorrow and trial had softened and at the same time strengthened. We constantly find that whilst the young man is "cock-sure" and dictatorial, the older and the wiser man hesitates to declare his opinions too dogmatically, however strongly he may

hold them. Had Drake realised this, he could never have written as he did of Milton, in his 'Mornings in Spring,' p. 319:

"Milton, though, of course, knowing the Copernican theory of the world as taught by Galileo, seems to hesitate in his choice between this and the system of Ptolemy. He 'trims,' as it were. So too, in his account of Creation, he 'hedges' between ancient and modern doctrines."

The great poet is great because he is intensely individual, and there can be no intense individuality that is not subject in a more than ordinary degree to the impressions of time and place. Who will deny the greatness of our poet? How, then, shall we eliminate from his work the influences upon so intense and impressionable a nature? Rather, we should say, such a toning of his thoughts is exactly what might have been expected in so devout a scholar and so great a poet, as the result of bitter and crushing experiences. That softer, humbler spirit in the poet, may be clearly discerned in its earlier stages, from a letter which Milton wrote to his friend Leonard Philares:

"Westminster, September 28th, 1654.

"To Leonard Philares,

". . . Whatever hope the physician may gather from this account, I compose myself under the consideration that I am certainly incurable. And I often think that since the days of darkness, to which every man is destined, are, as the wise man warns, many, that mine, by the great mercy of Providence happening in the midst of leisure and studies and the conversation and salutations of my friends, are much brighter than the shades of death. But as it is written, man does not live by bread alone, but by every

word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, why should not anyone submit for this reason also, that he can see not only with his eyes, but that the leading and providence of God is sufficient sight. Truly, if He take care of me, if He provide for me, which He does, and lead me by the hand, and accompany me through life, I shall willingly permit my eyes to be unemployed.

"Whatever befalls me, my Philares, I salute you with a mind not less strong and firm than if I were Lynceus."

Whilst his sorrows and his blindness may, at least in a measure, account for the less rancorous attitude of his great poem, yet there may be another, and, if correct, far more important reason why both the divergencies of Milton's mind from the conventional religious opinions of his day, and the usual bitter vituperation against his political opponents, are less obvious in 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained' than in his prose writings.

Those who have carefully read and studied the remarkable work of Milton's, partly didactic but chiefly allegorical, which Mr. Begley brought out a year or two ago, entitled 'Nova Solyma,' will probably find little ground for surprise in what I suggest; but it is just possible, that among those who object to everything new, simply because it has not already been said, and said many times, in their hearing, or who have not studied the character of Milton as a whole in the light of later knowledge, there may be some little divergence of opinion, on what seems to me an extremely probable explanation of an otherwise inscrutable mystery.

The more I study the question the more likely does it appear to me that, during the third period

of his life, Milton used poetry to express teachings which were of a personal, historical, or political nature, and which he either dared not or could not express so effectively in prose. In the light of such a thought it becomes easy to understand why a certain absence of logical continuity, or even the presence of a few apparent theological contradictions in the poem, would appear to the writer of far less importance than the actual truth of the historical meaning which he desired to convey; it will explain, too, why the nuances of theological controversy were made secondary to the historical teaching. Of this, however, I shall be compelled to speak at greater length when we come to discuss the religious purposes of Milton's poetic productions.

After the publication of 'Paradise Lost' in 1667, the zest of life seems to have passed from him, and the prematurely aged man became partially lost to the world, dwelling, indeed, apart, but from time to time coming back to earth to utter some word of wisdom. In our own experience it often happens that the strong impressions of youth return to us in old age. It was so with Milton. A year before his death he reverted to his old prose theme, politics in religion, directed against Popery in the State. It may have been that the increasing intrigues of the Duke of York and his Jesuit agents, frightened many Puritans, and led them to appeal once more to the aged and now obscure Milton; but it seems more likely that the visit paid him by the Duke of York led up to the poet's revived interest in his old controversy. James, Duke of York, had long been

desirous of seeing Milton, whom he had good reason to look upon with anything but friendly feelings. At last he obtained permission from the King to visit the poet; on going to his house he found the old man sitting, in his wonted manner, in the doorway. After making himself known, he asked the old Puritan whether he did not consider that all his troubles were a punishment sent him from God, in consequence of his wrong-doings towards the late King. "If," said the blind poet, "you consider that the troubles that come to us are acts of vengeance from God, what about your father? He lost his head, I have only lost my eyes!" We are told that when the Prince returned to his brother he earnestly besought him to hang Milton, whom he called "that old rebel." Charles asked his brother how he found the old man, and on hearing that he was blind as well as poor, replied that, since he was blind as well as old and poor, it would be a minor mercy to let him linger on under those evils than to hang him.

Whether this circumstance was, as it may have been, the actuating cause or not, the last great work of Milton before leaving this world was directed against the Papacy — 'Of True Religion, Heresie and Schism.' In this work he defined heresy as the Papacy, and declared that there was no other heresy but the spirit of that Church. Thus the full-grown man and the hoary-headed pilgrim are alike. Experience has, indeed, come to the latter, but the old passion for liberty is still there, and the old war-horse longs to be once more in the fray. The same permanent factor, moreover, has never been lost sight of, never been overshadowed—the absolute, un-

swerving and passionate belief in, and love for, the Word of God as the one and only true controller of human life and action.

I have already attempted to show the gradual evolution of the genius of the man we are honouring at this period, and the almost diametrically opposed tendencies of the first and second periods of his life; yet Milton, for all that, must ever be to most readers the sum-total of all these—one man combining in himself the poet, the scholar, the Puritan Christian and the political reformer. All these are to be found in the third period of Milton's life. If we could leave the consideration of the character of this great man at this point, our work would be infinitely easy, but even to the least deeply-read of his students there cannot fail to come the conviction that a clear line of severance exists between the author of the prose and the writer of the poetical works which are extant in the name of Milton. To pass from one to the other is like passing from the warm plains of northern Italy to the cold snows of the Alps; the contrast is intense. It is like passing from the lives of the martyrs to the petty squabbles of the councils, or from the Socrates of Plato to the Socrates of Aristophanes. We ask ourselves intuitively, can these have been one and the same man? So once more, whether willing or unwilling, we are compelled to try and understand, in the two apparently contradictory aspects of his thoughts and character, the man who, probably more than any other writer, has helped to mould English religious thought.

On the one hand we have the poet and the Puritan Christian, gentle, though vigorous, scholarly and

spiritual; on the other hand, the controversialist and the political Puritan, hard and cold, and, above all, the bitter partisan, the antinomian, the uncompromising reformer and political agitator.

The two united, yet neither separately, are the true Milton. The greatness of Milton's genius as a prose writer will not be doubted by any whose opinion is worth considering; but it is in his poetry that we love him most. The majesty of his diction, as well as the deep resonance of his metre, fill us with a sense of greatness, dignity and power. There, Milton is at his best, and there, in his character of poet, we shall wish to leave him. Let us, therefore, turn first of all to the consideration of our great fellow-countryman's teaching, which is least known, perhaps, because it is represented by his prose works, which are not often perused in these days.

Here we find John Milton the politician, the radical, the Puritan, the rebel, and above all the dissenter from Church practice and teaching. He had been, as we know, intended for the office of a priest in the Church of England, but that was rendered impossible for so conscientious a nature by the demands of an orthodoxy which was hard, cold, and uncompromising. The much-loved instructor of his boyhood, Thomas Young, had been driven out of the country by the Church. His college tutor, a churchman of the typical kind, whose business it was to train him for the ministry, was "a man of narrow and meagre powers," who, after lowering himself sufficiently to strike the young man, doubtless for disagreeing with him on some theological subject, had him rusticated from Cambridge. Nor

was this all. Just two years before he left the University, England was stirred by the cruel treatment meted out to Dr. Leighton, a Puritan divine, by the ecclesiastical powers, at that time influenced by Laud. Dr. Leighton had published a book against Episcopacy, and for this he was seized, whilst coming from church, and taken to Newgate, where he was kept for four months. He was then summoned before the Star Chamber Commission. Being too ill to attend, he was condemned unheard, degraded from the ministry, publicly whipped, put in the pillory, one of his ears cut off, his nose slit, publicly branded and taken back to prison without any hope of release.

Moreover, Milton's letter to his friend, Leonard Philares, which I have already quoted, indicates the state of theological study at Cambridge, showing how trumpery and superficial was the attention given among churchmen to really vital questions. No wonder then, at a time when (as some would have it in our day) the suppression of all intellectual effort and a blind subservience to meaningless formularies were made the test of churchmanship, when the evidences of the heartless and cruel deeds of the bishops and court clerics of his time were constantly before him, no wonder, that the freedom-loving soul of Milton, with its wild and passionate devotion to truth and honour, refused to associate itself with such a policy, and objected to solemnly swearing to uphold a system which was to him little short of the re-introduction of the Spanish inquisition into England.

I quote his own words: From 'Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy':

"The Church to whose service, by the intention of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child and of my own resolution, till coming to some maturity of years and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the Church, that he who would take Orders must subscribe slave, and take oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure or straight split his faith; I thought it better to prefer blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and foreswearing."

In 'Iconoclastes' we have evidence of the same spirit:

"The pulpit stuff of the prelates, both first and last, hath been the doctrine and perpetual infusion of servility and wretchedness to all their hearers, and their lives the type of worldliness and hypocrisy, without the least true pattern of virtue, righteousness, and self-denial, in their whole practice."

Milton's quarrel with the Church was manifold; in the first place he disliked Episcopacy, for to him that savoured of the "Rome" which he and every Puritan so heartily loathed. From the first to the last moment of his life he looked upon the Pope as Antichrist and the arch-enemy of human happiness and freedom; "Popery," he says, "is the only heresy," and in consequence, for the "infallible man" he substituted the "infallible book." He could not do otherwise, for Milton was far too deeply thoughtful a man to suppose that even in his own day the human heart could be satisfied with anything less than some objective foundation for its moral security.

Speaking generally, from 1641 to 1660 Milton

devoted himself and his writings to attacking the many-headed hydra of Papacy, which he considered the real enemy of man, of which Episcopacy, the Court, the marriage laws, Ecclesiastical courts, a paid clergy and the censorship of the Press were only aspects. Twenty-two out of twenty-three of his works during that period are in prose, and are invariably controversial. The danger which appeared to Milton to be the most serious form of Papacy in England was Episcopacy; Episcopacy to him meant Archbishop Laud and his doings, and therefore again and again he attacks not only the bishops, but the very liturgy of the Church itself, which seemed to him to be too nearly associated with the authority claimed by the supporters of Episcopal government.

"Hark ye prelates," he says, "is this your glorious father of England, who, whereas Christ hath taught her to pray, thinks it not enough unless she adds thereto the teaching of Antichrist? How can we believe you would refuse to take the stipend of Rome, when you shame not to live upon the alms basket of her prayers? Will you persuade us that ye can curse Rome from your hearts when naught but Rome must teach you to pray?"—Apology for Smectymnuus.

Next in order of importance, it would seem, loomed the "Throne," but in no doubtful way does Milton let us know that to him the throne and the individual monarch need not be the same. He has no quarrel with kings as kings; nay, he theoretically approved of them, as is seen from his 'Commonplace Book.' On page 220, he says: "Peter's Pence ordained to be given to the Pope by Inas, the west

Saxon, the ignominious price of our damnation, *vide* leges, and disannull'd by the noble Edward III," whilst elsewhere he tells us, quite definitely, that he has no quarrel with kings as such, but with maladministration, and herein, no doubt, we might trace the influence of Hobbes' 'Elementa Philosophica de Cive,' which was published at Paris, 1646, and at Amsterdam, in 1647.

We have already pointed out how sensitive such a character must have been to the influences of his time, and we can therefore easily trace his attacks on Episcopacy to those disturbing forces which, in Scotland, brought about the Solemn League and Covenant, and in England the execution of Laud, whilst the civil war will be quite sufficient to account for such works as 'Iconoclastes' and the 'Defensiones contra Salmasius,' or 'Pro Populo Anglicano.' When, however, we have said this, we cannot fail to recognise that it would be unfair to Milton to accept the view that he was influenced solely by the tendency of events, and that high principle played no part in the course he took. A firm disbelief in Prelacy, and dread of the combined forces of the irreligious and immoral Charles, with the subtle and unprincipled church-spirit of the times, might easily seem to him to be great dangers; but surely they would not justify such violent words or such bitter attacks as those which the poet, who loved his Bible and his God, hurled against them. There were indeed, other forces at work on his mind.

Milton, about the year 1645, may well be compared to Savonarola, who, a century earlier, filled with a mighty passion for righteousness, inveighing

against the Rome of his day, and associating with the false church the false ruler, attacked at once the ecclesiastical power of Rome and the civil administration of the Medicis. Milton, on his visit to Italy, was twice at Florence, where the memories of the martyred monk were fresh in the minds of men, and where the ill-treatment of Galileo must have made the events of the murder of Savonarola very realistic. Such a nature as Milton's cannot have failed to see in the sincerity of the preacher of St. Mark's, the ideal Christian man and leader. As he stood in Florence, on the site of the martyrdom of Savonarola, how he must have recalled again and again, the treatment meted out to many of his own friends by the Star Chamber Commission, and, not the least important among these, his tutor Young, and Dr. Leighton. There, too, in Florence, he saw what seemed to him the evils of the united forces of Church and Crown directed against liberty and against what appeared to him to be the teachings of the Bible and true religion.

Like Savonarola, his soul was stirred by the grand conception of a theocracy, and as the years passed and his devotion to the memory of Galileo grew stronger, he became more and more the devotee of the theocratic ideal. Now that the Papacy was driven out, the bishops must go too, and though there might be no inherent wrong in royalty, yet its association with the two former made it undesirable to Milton. He felt the intense need of a thorough sweeping of the national chamber, whether of King Charles and his unprincipled court and advisers, or of the sycophant bishops, who

seemed to him to care more for their own comfort than for the welfare of the people. That Milton, however, was not in favour of rebellion and sedition may be gathered from the entries of p. 246 of his Common-place Book "De seditione." Moreover, in his letter to Louis XIV he addresses him with every respect. He had probably learned to know the Sovereign when, on his visit to Grotius during 1638, he stayed in Paris. Whilst he could feel reverent and respectful to a monarch whose interest in learning was of a high order, a mean and dishonourable nature like that of Charles I, whose intimate—too intimate—association with the loose and dissolute Buckingham, men of that day knew only too well, could find no place in the sympathies of an heroic nature like Milton's;—as of the Court of that day, so of the Court of the Restoration, very little can be said in its favour. It had little or no appreciation from that honest writer of the period, Drake, who, in his 'Mornings in Spring,' gives us what he calls the "Dream of Galileo, or the Pleasures of Knowledge," and in so doing describes in fairly accurate terms the spirit of those court circles, which in his day were dominated by ecclesiastical dignitaries.

"Thus, Viviani, did I speak to myself; and then threw an envious glance upon my persecutors. These wretches, exclaimed I, who hide their ignorance under mysterious forms, and conceal their vices in a venerable garb; who sanctify their indolence by imposing on the world the inventions of men for the oracles of God, and join to pursue, with unrelenting fury, the sage who raises the torch of truth, lest their luxurious slumber should be broken by its splendour; these vile ones, who are only active for their own pleasures and the corruption of the

world; who laugh at misery in their gilded palaces; whose life is only one round of dissipation; how have they robbed merit of all, even of glory, the most precious of its rewards! With what blind devotion do the people bow to them, whom they cozen so shamefully of the fruits of their possessions, and provide for themselves the most luxurious entertainments from the fat of their herds and the produce of their vineyards!"—'Mornings in Spring,' by Nathan Drake. ("The Dream of Galileo, or the Pleasures of Knowledge.")

These are not Milton's words, but they are a vivid picture of Milton's thoughts. Nothing, too, but a passionate longing for the rule of righteousness in the land can account for the words of Milton in his 'Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence,' words which allude to the execution of the Earl of Strafford, the imprisonment of Archbishop Laud, the destruction of Episcopacy in Scotland and the flight of the King and Queen.

"O Thou the ever-begotten Light and perfect Image of the Father! Thou hast opened our difficult and sad times, and given us an unexpected breathing after our long oppressions: Thou hast done justice upon those that tyrannised over us, while some men wavered and admired a vain shadow of wisdom in a tongue nothing slow to utter guile, though Thou hast taught us to admire only that which is good, and to count that only praiseworthy, which is grounded upon the Divine precepts. Thou hast discovered the plots, and frustrated the hopes of all the wicked in the land, and put to shame the persecutors of Thy church: Thou has made our false prophets to be found a lie in the sight of all the people, and chased them with sudden confusion and amazement before the redoubled brightness of Thy descending cloud that now covers Thy tabernacle."—From 'Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence.' etc.

I have already shown how strongly the temperament of Milton reacted from the conventionalisms of his day, more especially from such as could be either directly or indirectly associated with the Church of Rome. Amongst these, of course, came the marriage laws, and this fact, far more than anything else, tended to direct the trend of his studies against them. We know that the unhappy conditions of his marriage with Mary Powell must have had an influence upon his views in this matter; but this would not be sufficient to account for the numerous attacks which he made on the conventions of his own time relating to divorce and monogamy.

In addition to the predisposing conditions alluded to, there were other reasons: Milton soon discovered and carefully noted how the Papacy had seen the value of dictating to men in the matter of marriage, in order to increase both its power and the immense financial harvest which was reaped by that Church every year from dispensations to break any or every moral law and marriage responsibility. All this was only too well known to Milton. Hence the following extract from his 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce':

"The Popes of Rome perceiving the great reverence and high authority it would give them over princes, to have the judging and deciding of such main consequence in the life of man as was divorce, wrought so, . . . by means of which they subjected that ancient and naturally domestic prerogative to an external and unbefitting judicature.—Cap. 21.

His prejudiced but would-be just mind could not

fail to see some connection between his own unhappy condition and the Papal power he so much disliked.

There was, perhaps, another and a greater influence. The error into which he had fallen of replacing an infallible man or church by an infallible book was bound to bear its own fruit—to him the one and only possible appeal was to the Word of God, and in the theocracy which the mind of Milton had already conjured up, this was the final court. From so eastern a book, interpreted literally, the difficulties of deducing a moral code suitable for a western, not to say a northern people, was great; and Milton, by his slavish obedience to the text, fell into the error of ignoring the spirit of the Bible itself.

In consequence the 'Doctrine of Divorce,' so universally held in eastern lands, came easily to his hand, and once having let go those ties of the matrimonial state, which had been the guide of his ancestors, it was but a short transition from that to the principle of polygamy.

The inherent purity and goodness of Milton's own mind doubtless helped considerably to make him ignore the evils which would come from following out in practice what to him was but an academic theory. He forgot that there are at all times many who but too gladly avail themselves of any excuse for evading those restraints which are always burdensome to ill-balanced natures. This curious hatred of even the most salutary restraints seems to be characteristic of the Puritan nature. Like the Ultramontaines, the Puritans held that it was only for God to declare His will and it was the duty of the creature to obey that will, which needed

no justification, but unquestioning obedience. This theory is really the monastic ideal, whether amongst Roman Catholics or the less logical but equally ascetic Puritans. This is most definitely laid down in their teachings, yet who so difficult to govern as the Puritans at all times? No obstacles seem to stand in their way, and they invariably get over every difficulty by associating God's will with their own, except in those cases where the conditions are such that they are helpless, and then they become fatalists. It must have been something of this spirit which more or less unconsciously influenced our poet when he took up so enthusiastically the attitude towards marriage, which, though in theory he seems to have approved, it is inconceivable that he should have been willing to adopt under any conditions. It is, however, possible that the personal sting of conscious rectitude, suffering so undeservedly, may have had something to do with his publications on divorce. There is, however, something elevated in the following, from his work on that subject. After attempting to show how little Christian charity there was amongst those who attempted to bind the marriage bond too tightly—a lesson not altogether unnecessary at the present time—he says:

"Yet, when I remember the little that our Saviour could prevail about this doctrine of charity, against the crabbed textuists of His time, I make no wonder, but rest confident that he, who so prefers either matrimony or other ordinance before the good of man, and the plain exigencies of charity, let him profess Papist or Protestant, or what he will, he is no better than a Pharisee, and understands not the Gospel, whom as a misrepresenter of Christ, I protest against."

We have already stated that the work known as 'De Doctrina' must have been written between 1643 and 1645, and if this be so, then the attacks on Milton's 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce' would be quite sufficient to account for the objection of any publisher to produce this work at the time, whilst it is quite in accordance with the unsettled conditions of that period for Milton to have postponed the publication of so large a work until he had time to revise it. That revision never took place, owing, perhaps, to its having been lost sight of, or to a modification of views which the more responsible position which was accorded him in the service of Cromwell brought with it.

There can be little doubt that even then publishers were very chary of producing books which could be the means of bringing them under the displeasure of the courts, and in 1645 and 1646 political matters were far too undecided for anyone to venture to risk the vengeance of the Church party, which might at any moment prove victorious. These circumstances would be quite sufficient, then, to account for the non-publication of 'De Doctrina' and the consequent production of 'Areopagitica,' Milton's protest against the obstacles placed in the way of freedom of publication. Doubtless the necessity which compelled him to publish his tracts relating to the question of divorce secretly without "imprimatur" may have, and probably did have, the effect of stimulating him to protest publicly against that censorship, which must have galled his free nature to distraction. It is probable that one at least of the causes which prevented Milton from

revising for publication that most important work 'De Doctrina,' was, that during the period of Cromwell's *régime*, his official duties were no sinecure, and that whilst on the one hand time may have been wanting, on the other it would probably have been considered, even by his own friends, detrimental to the cause they all had at heart, for one in an official position, such as that held by the poet, to produce in print matter so controversial and so likely to create distrust in the minds of the community. Under such circumstances the MS. would be relegated for a time to some place of safety. Its history will probably remain unknown to us from that time until 1823, when Mr. Lemon, deputy-keeper of the Records, discovered it, and, by the direction of George IV it was committed to the care of his librarian, Mr. Sumner, afterwards Prebendary and Bishop Sumner, for editing and translation. The intense interest that work evoked, the controversy which raged over it in the Royal Society of Literature and the intimate connection of all the actors in that comedy, will be dilated upon in a paper read before that Society; but it seems that in estimating the views of Milton so important a document cannot be lightly passed over. That Bishop Burgess should have felt bound, in order to support his own writings, to throw doubts upon the authenticity of a work which has now been so universally accepted as genuine, does not concern us here. What we have to do is to ascertain and explain the attitude which is adopted by Milton in this work. As we study this interesting production of the great man's pen, it becomes doubly important as indicating, not only by its subject-matter, but also

from its non-publication by himself, the poise of his mind, and that genuine desire not only to obtain, but to promulgate truth, which actuated him.

In his 'Areopagitica' he shows us something of his inner self with regard to speculative theology, and the sincerity and intensity of his convictions will be more evident when we remember that Milton lived at a time when men often suffered severely by the deprivation of friends, honours, and even of life for any want of conformity with the accepted religious formularies of their day. The following are his own words:

"We do not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as soon fall again into a gross conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of wood and hay and stubble forc't and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church than many subdichotomies of petty schisms."

With regard to the work on Christian Doctrine, Dr. Hunt, in the 'Bibliotheca Sacra,' says: "It is to be deeply regretted that Milton ever penned such a treatise and defended such views." But still, as Masson adds: "The book exists; it is Milton's, and was his solemn and last bequest to all Christendom."

Both writers have fallen into error over the date from the words at the commencement of the manuscript in which Milton speaks of this as his "best and richest possession," a superscription which is more in accord with the self-satisfaction of the young man than the mature judgment of an experienced and humble Christian pilgrim. Milton, however, in the preface, alludes to "those who have

written most largely on these subjects," and almost names Dr. Ames when he says they "have been wont to fill whole pages with explanations of their own opinions, thrusting into the margin the texts in support of their doctrines." In one instance he actually mentions Ames by name.

Those who wish to convince themselves further as to the date of this work, will do well to compare respectively the style of Milton in his 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce' and the work on 'True Religion, Heresie and Schism,' with the work 'De Doctrina,' and they will require no further evidence. Having come to realise that this work, however interesting, was not intended in his later years by Milton for publication, and that it was the work of the younger and passionate partisan, we may ask, Why trouble to discuss the work further? To this we would say that it tends to illustrate one of the most beautiful and interesting characteristics of the poet and writer—his spontaneity, his intense impressionability, his sensitiveness. The introduction into his life of Dr. Ames' 'Marrow of Sacred Divinity' was quite sufficient in Milton to evoke the other extreme, which we have in the work 'De Doctrina'; yet, whilst for his own pleasure or edification clinging to the old work, in later years when publishing or re-publishing his earlier and even his later works, this has no place amongst them, and is considered by its author too crude to be given to the public. It does not seem to me a matter for regret that he should have penned these lines, for they at once explain much in his other works that would be otherwise difficult to understand, and they also

prove to us how unwise it is to judge a writer from any of these spasmodic utterances, which every man of worth is at times led to utter or pen, and which, in many cases, need either modification or explanation.

Almost every body of Christians, from advanced Anglicans to the most restricted Plymouth Brethren, have claimed Milton for their own, and on the occasion of his bi-centenary multitudes of churches and chapels joined in celebrating his birth, and at the same time attempted to prove his oneness with themselves. Since that time 'De Doctrina' has been found and published, and it would be most interesting to know how many of these bodies on the occasion of his ter-centenary had the courage to associate themselves with the great thinker who could, even from the purely controversial and academic point of view, write such a work. I think that we shall, in all probability, find that there was a marked difference between the utterances of 1808 and those of 1908. Why? For an answer let us consider the work itself.

The book, which Dr. Sumner so ably translated, is divided into two parts:

I. Of Faith, or the Knowledge of God.

II. Of Love, or the Service of God.

This work may be summed up as follows:

(1) It declares in favour of absolute freedom of will, unaffected by the foreknowledge of God.

(2) Predestination is not particular, but general.

(3) With regard to the Second Person of the Trinity, the position of the Arians of the Unitarian School is adopted; but it is asserted that the Son is

a person, and that both the Son and Spirit were God's agents in creating the world.

(4) Man is a single being, not complex. Therefore at death the whole man dies. There is no natural immortality, except as the gift of Jesus Christ.

(5) The doctrine of "once saved" is a mere fable.

(6) The Jewish law has been utterly abolished.

(7) Baptism should only be administered to adults, and then only by immersion.

(8) Transubstantiation is spoken of in the most bitter language, and as destructive to Holy Communion, which, though not essential, may be administered by anyone, preferably the head of the house as in the Passover.

(9) Polygamy and divorce are in accordance with the will of God.

Much of this is an advance on the thought of his day, but much is obviously the work of an enthusiastic and deeply emotional mind, and one whose aquaintance with the Bible, whilst profound, is an acquaintance rather with the letter than with the spirit of Holy Scripture. There is little in it of that matured and mellowed spirit which we see in Milton after the period of his great sorrow.

The twentieth century reader can hardly gauge properly the spirit of those times and the actuating influences under which Milton wrote. It will be far easier to understand this work if we thoroughly grasp the thought that Milton's chief characteristic was his adherence to the right and duty of individual judgment, a doctrine that sometimes led him too

far. The attempt to coerce his opinions, which was often effected in those days by legal penalties, was quite enough, in such a man, to drive him to the other extreme, a not uncommon effect where a great thinker is attacked by those who are by far his inferiors in intellect. One may but instance in this relation the case of Professor Huxley, who, far from being antagonistic to the true principles of religion, would in all probability, if he had found sympathetic treatment, have led the way to a far better understanding between religion and science than became possible when, after repeated attacks of Lilliputian foes, he was goaded into taking up an attitude far more pronounced than he would have adopted under other conditions. No characteristic of Milton's nature stands out in more prominent relief upon the pages of his writing than his love of individual judgment. He had adopted the principle very early in life "to swear in the words of no master." "Every prose treatise," says Dr. Hunt, "that he wrote might be called an Areopagitica, an argument for the fullest freedom of expression." He claimed the right to inquire into truth for himself, and "living in the birth of Deism, he accepted every occasion to express his faith in the Scriptures, and thus to confirm, in that rationalistic age, any wavering minds." Probably the mistake he made was placing too great a reliance on individual judgment, at a time when so many circumstances went to bias the opinion, which under other circumstances and conditions might have been profoundly correct. Thus, whether in the range of politics or religion, Milton is always himself, and we frankly recognise

him as theologically unconventional. Without that characteristic Milton would never have been the Milton we honour. His is an unorthodoxy of a noble stamp, and above all there is no thought of self or self-aggrandisement in it. Milton is always above self-seeking; even in his earlier days we note this; he tells us, for instance, how he came to give up all his cherished plans for further visiting Italy:

"The melancholy tidings of the Civil War recalled me; for I esteemed it dishonourable for me to be lingering abroad, even for the improvement of my mind, when my fellow-citizens were contending for their liberty at home."

In his 'Second Defence of the People of England,' in reply to an anonymous libel, he raises the curtain once more:

"If I inveigh against tyrants, what is that to kings, whom I am far from associating with tyrants. . . . . Nor was I ever prompted to such exertions by the influence of ambition, by the lust of lucre, or of praise; it was only by the conviction of duty and the feeling of patriotism, a disinterested passion for the extension of civil and religious liberty."

Hear the great mind exulting over the triumph of liberty. How dignified! How righteous!

"The virtue of my fellow citizens, far exceeding that of their progenitors in greatness of soul and vigour of enterprise, having invoked Heaven to witness the justice of their cause and been clearly governed by its directions, has succeeded in delivering the Commonwealth from the most grievous tyranny, and religion from the most ignominious degradation."—'Second Defence of the People of England.'

Many of Milton's mistakes are due to his Christian

Utopia, which made him lose sight of the profligacy and miseries his ideas would produce amongst the masses. No one can doubt that he was sincere and disinterested and entirely conscientious. Whilst we admire, we may venture tenderly to criticise that fatal propensity of all imaginative men, when once convinced of the sublimity of their own views, to overleap every obstacle and treat all intermediate considerations as subordinate, in order to advance and accelerate the great end in view.

To Milton, the Republican idea loomed up in disproportionate greatness, and whether we like it or not we shall have to acknowledge that it limited his range of vision and made him unable to see the good or portray the beauty that are often found in totally opposed principles.

In the range of religious thought he was no less a reformer. There was no heresy to him but that of the Papacy; hear his own views:

"Heresy, therefore, is a religion taken up and believed from the traditions of men, and additions to the word of God. Whence also it follows clearly, that of all known sects or pretended religions at this day in Christendom, Popery is the only or the greatest heresy; and he who is so forward to brand all others for heretics, the obstinate Papist, the only heretic."—'Of True Religion, Heresy, and Schism.'

This utterance, moreover, let it be remembered, was his last word on religious questions. It may be justly urged that the spirit of strong and fervent piety which animated Milton, was also to be found in many of the important men of that day—a tur-

bulent period which always produces character; yet there is this to note: Milton does not seem to have given way to the folly and fanaticism which often disfigured the piety of his contemporaries. Acton, in his 'Life of Milton,' rightly points out that:

"He felt the influence of sacred truths working mightily upon all the faculties, intellectual and moral, of his gigantic mind: chastening, expanding, and elevating all his private affections; filling his soul in her moments of solitude with all kinds of pure and heavenly meditations; strengthening his heart to do his duty manfully in the walks of public life, in the glorious conflict for liberty and truth; guiding him throughout his years of activity to deeds of disinterested virtue and heroic patriotism; and finally consoling him in his last desolate days, when he was left to mourn apart in affliction, poverty, and blindness."

His deeper religious convictions were for himself, and not for the masses; he had given up the right to preach; his greatest works were either not published by himself, or contained his convictions in academic form, yet, whether for himself or others, it is clear that it was a source of deep regret to the great man that he was obliged to view these truths in a different way from his fellows. He seems to have waged a continuous internal war between his own interpretation of the Scriptures and the accepted creeds of the Church, and what makes him soar high in our estimation, surely, is that we feel that though he would have sacrificed anything short of truth to have been able to modify his beliefs so as to conform to the common opinion, he preferred to justify his conscience rather to God than to man.

"Too heterodox for the orthodox, he is far too orthodox for those whose chief tenet is scepticism, yet he is a true member of the Christian Church, where, however, he dwells apart—an intellectual hermit, isolated as regards some of his opinions, yet no sectarian in spirit, but most truly Catholic."

When we come to consider Milton as the poet, we enter upon a domain full of wide stretches of speculative thought, teeming with elusive and apparently contradictory statements, rich in every aspect of classical literature, in which the divinities of ancient mythology meet you everywhere, but this does not suffice to sum up the poet. He makes us conscious of his own times, he demonstrates most clearly the questions at issue, domestic or foreign, whether relating to Church or State. In all these, he is not only interested, but keenly, passionately concerned, yet, whatever be the point of view from which we look at him, he seems at first, and on the surface of things, so far as his poetry is concerned, to be either illogical or inconsequent, yet all this is what makes him live in our own day. He is never fettered or hampered by the commonplace or the conventional. He is free as air, and as his moods change so do his utterances. When merely intellectually stirred, the emotion comes out in his prose writings. When his theme is deep, solemn, and, above all, personal, then he gives us himself in verse, and it is always his best self. That those who live in a cramped atmosphere, whose world is the little rut wherein there is but room for few to move, should see in this untamable mind, in this greatest yet most reverent of all free

thinkers, a dangerous and meaningless man, need be no matter for surprise. One who could write as Milton does, needs a generation of free, cultured and honest thinkers, which can appreciate with respect his errors, if there be such, in order that they may reverence and understand the profound truths which he utters. How many of us, for instance, would to-day agree with the following article on Keble's estimate of Milton—an estimate which would have met with nothing but approval in Keble's own day :

"In politics he was a violent Republican ; in theology he denied the eternal existence of the Son ; in morals, though pure himself, he was yet a defender of polygamy. 'His book is himself,' writes Mr. Pattison. 'It is not an atom thrown off from the soul—it is a manifestation of the soul.' If so, then these, his cherished views, must manifest themselves in the poem, and they have manifested themselves ; and . . . . they do, if they intensify his power, they impair his openness of heart, narrow his range of vision, and repel those—and they are many—who, like Keble, are neither Puritans nor Republicans."—"Keble's Estimate of Milton," by J. C. Shairp, p. 558, 'Macmillan's Magazine.'

Style in poetry during the Jacobean and Caroline days was intimately associated with classical allusions, and to no small extent did poets devote themselves to the translation of the odes of Horace, Juvenal, Pindar, and similar writers. The result, however, of this was to limit the subjects and the ideas of the writers, and it naturally followed that the degree of human interest became equally constricted. From this Milton was preserved by his

omnivorous reading, his interest in the world of men, and, above all, by his travels.

The first literary influences upon Milton's budding genius were Chaucer, Spenser, and Sylvester's translations of Du Bartas, whilst Shakespeare and Fletcher must have been amongst his favourite authors.

We have already seen how the theological controversies of Manning and Gill had affected him, and his quarrel with his tutor Chappel would predispose him to a deep sympathy with the researches and writings of Galileo, whom he travelled to Italy to see. Whilst at Florence it is probable that he came into touch with the works of Benedetti Bonmattei, which may have given him the first stimulus towards the production of an heroic poem. In Florence he doubtless laid the foundation of that horror of bigotry and oppression which became so characteristic of the man; there, too, he must have imbibed his love for research and scientific learning, and intensified his strong Protestant dislike for the Roman Church. He could not fail to have been deeply impressed by the solemn fortitude and resignation of the persecuted astronomer Galileo, whilst the delightful love and admiration of his youthful companion Vincenzo Viviani for this great man was a memory that he never forgot. Though speaking of himself, he is but uttering the echo of that Florentine memory, when he says in his sonnet to Cyriac Skinner:

> "Yet I argue not
> Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
> Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
> Right onward."

At Rome he saw Leonora Baroni. Devoted as he was to music, she fascinated him, and the memory of her voice and person seems to have been one of the sweet recollections of his life. Possibly his admiration for her tended to broaden his sympathy for art, and to make him realise something of the delights enjoyed by the "entourage" of the Papal Court. In consequence of his introduction to Cardinal Barberini, at whose reception he heard and saw the beautiful and gifted singer, he also became acquainted with Holstenius, who, under Cardinal Barberini, had changed his religious views, and had in consequence been appointed one of the librarians of the Vatican. In that library, under the able guidance of Holstenius, what may not Milton have seen? In that metropolis of literature, that ocean of manuscripts and books, he must have seen, learnt and read far more than we can well estimate, much, at least, that enabled him afterwards to describe the real condition of the Papal court with such wonderful accuracy. Not least important among his acquaintances in Italy was Giovanni Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa. Milton had, doubtless, been introduced to him either by Grotius, whom he had seen in Paris, or possibly by Galileo himself. In order to see the Marquis Milton went to Naples. Manso had been the friend of Tasso. Here Milton would learn to admire Tasso, whilst enjoying the hospitality of the veteran who had befriended, comforted and admired that great writer. Milton's nature was far too impressionable for him not to feel stimulated to follow the leadership of a writer for whom he felt so deep an admiration, and in his

poem, addressed to "Fra cavalier magnanimi, è cortese resplende il Manso," he gives us an insight into the aspirations which had then begun to affect him, and which culminated in 'Paradise Lost':

> "O mihi si mea sors talem consedat amicum,
> Phoeboeos decorâsse viros qui tam bene nôrit,
> Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
> Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem!
> Aut dicam invictae sociali foedere mensae
> Magnanimos heroas."

From the moment he came to know Manso there came upon him the desire to imitate the 'Geruselamme Liberata' of Torquato Tasso! On the return of Milton to England the whole idea had to be put aside owing to the pressure of political needs, but the seed was in his heart and ultimately bore fruit.

Quite early in his life Milton describes himself. 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,' though apparently so different, are two halves of the same poem, each complementary to the other. First we have the artist—the wild, flashing genius that rushes headlong, and plunges into every excitement, "in unreproved pleasures free." To Milton, in 'L'Allegro,' the most pleasing character is "Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child." Why? Simply because there is a passionateness about him. He, indeed, can "Warble his native wood-notes wild." This is one side of Milton's nature, and so he says:

> "These delights if thou canst give,
> Mirth, with thee I mean to live."

Then we have the 'Patriot.' The same man in his more thoughtful moments sees life from quite

another point of view, when the stress and strain of political life demand all his courage and acumen, when the claims of home and state are strong upon him, he must let go the more charming side, he must leave the skies and come down to cold earth, and so—

> "Hence, vain deluding joys,
> The brood of folly without father bred,
> How little you bestead,"

In the moments of difficulty he desires to have higher help. From the beginning he is deeply religious:

> "But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloister's pale,"

> "There let the pealing organ blow,
> To the full voiced quire below,
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all heav'n before mine eyes."

> "Till old experience do attain
> To something like prophetic strain."

Milton needed much training ere he could adopt the submissive spirit. A long series of struggles with the world and with himself were requisite before he could, in the humility which is characteristic of a great man, humbly bow before the afflicting hand of God. After these bitter experiences, however, he not only desires to show the world that he could bravely take trouble as from a loving Father's hand, but in the faith that all would some day be set right resolves to put his faith into words, and thus to "justify the ways of God to man." In

one of his last works, 'Samson Agonistes,' aptly alluding to himself, he says:

> "All these indignities, for such they are,
> From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
> Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
> Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
> Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
> Gracious to re-admit the suppliant."

These words, written not long before he died, give us much of his spirit. His had been, indeed, a long battle. Deep in his heart lay the bitterness of the neglect of those friends who, in the days of prosperity, were glad to use him for their own ends, and who, for their own purposes alone, professed friendship and devotion to him.

The failure of his life in marrying a Royalist wife rather than a Puritan came home to him bitterly in his later years. The continued success of his foes is a very real pain to him, whilst the sense of his own unselfishness and integrity of purpose is ever present with him. Yet he recognises his faults and acknowledges his errors, whilst at the same time grieving over the irreligion which the Roman influences seem to him to be bringing on the country. The contemptuous visit of the Duke of York has deeply wounded him; the partial truth which the malice of the Duke had uttered has stung the old patriot, all the more from the fact that his country which he had served, has failed him in his hour of need; yet a sense of security comes to him from the fact that his enemies have nothing worse that they can do to him, for death itself would be a release.

We now turn to Milton's greater poems, 'Paradise Lost,' 'Paradise Regained,' and 'Samson Agonistes.'

From 1640 to 1660 Milton practically wrote no verse. His marriage, his troubles, domestic and otherwise, the care of his school, and, above all, his share in the responsibilities of the Commonwealth as Latin secretary to Cromwell, gave him scant time for the cultivation of the poetic muse, yet at the beginning of that period his mind had been deeply absorbed in the subject of a great poem that should imitate and vie with Tasso's 'Geruselamme Liberata,' and before that period had closed we find him composing his theme for the immortal work which has, more than anything else, made his reputation as a poet. 'Paradise Lost' was the work to which he devoted himself at the close of his political career. If Milton be true to himself, 'Paradise Lost' ought to reflect and reproduce for us the inmost spirit of the Milton of the political period of his life, and as politics and religion were to the poet one and the same, it will be my task to attempt to show that such undoubtedly is the case.

So far I have endeavoured to point out that in the first, or emotional, period of Milton's life he was chiefly interested in acquiring knowledge, both religious and secular, and in perfecting his own capacities or developing his art, and that whilst the same strong and patriotic character, which is so emphasised in his later life, was also prominent in him at that time, neither political aspirations nor theological subtleties intruded themselves into his writings. In the second, or political portion of his

life he evidenced an unswerving independence, not only in all forms of speculative thought, but also in the courageousness of his actions, which even to-day fill us with wonder and admiration. In the third, or contemplative period, whilst his intellectual grasp became intensified, sorrow and experience modified the cruder methods of his warfare. Nevertheless, the same theological and political ideas are present in the poet and his writings, though more carefully considered, and therefore more essentially part of the man himself.

It thus becomes necessary to account for the less offensive, less dogmatic, and less drastic tone of 'Paradise Lost,' after the sheer declarations and somewhat wild assertions and denunciations in the work 'De Doctrina,' just alluded to, as also in view of the works published after the production of 'Paradise Lost.'

To those who have followed the line of argument thus far, there ought to be no difficulty in evolving from the conditions of Milton's life just that disposition and tendency which we intuitively feel underlies the production of the most attractive of Milton's works. That 'Paradise Lost' as well as 'Paradise Regained' are probably unorthodox has been freely admitted by many, and only the fact that it is poetry, and that tradition had for so long cast a halo of "soundness" round the poet's head, could have prevented writers before 1825 recognising the truth more widely. Indeed, at a comparatively early date in the nineteenth century, or even as early as the eighteenth, this was no new idea, and many have been the suggestions put forth by the

critics of those days that 'Paradise Lost' indicated a tendency to dangerous views. Charles Symmons in 1806 wrote: "The author in his younger years was orthodox, but he afterwards altered his sentiments." In 1825 Bishop Sumner seems, to judge by his preface to 'De Doctrina,' to have come to the same conclusion, while Wharton, in the eighteenth century, alluding to the passage—

> "Gabriel this day by proof thou shalt behold,
> Thou and all angels . . .
> . . . . . .
> To earn salvation for the sons of men."

wrote: "On frequent and thorough perusal of this passage I cannot forbear being of Mr. Calton's opinion that there is no word here said of the Son of God, but what Socinians, or at least Arians, would allow." The same view may also be found expressed in Newton's 'Life of Milton,' published in 1758. I need not here allude to the numerous writers who, after the publication of 'De Doctrina,' recognised, as by common consent, many indications of a character which the sincere desire not to notice had led many earlier students to pass over. Granting, however, as I imagine we must do, that there are to be found instances of heterodox opinions in the two greater poems, how are we to account for the moderation of tone found in 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained' so unlike the bolder tendencies of the previous works?

Few, I am sure, who have studied Milton deeply, could be brought to believe that such a softening-

down was due to any desire to shield himself, or to obtain publication for his works; the writer of 'Areopagitica' was of a different mould from this! He says:

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

The answer to the problem lies in the personal experiences of the author, and above all, in the purposes for which they were written

Milton was after all human, and as such felt, and felt deeply. Let us picture him as he writes his 'Paradise Lost.' Hitherto we have known the stern Puritan, with his deep, intense hatred of Rome and Episcopacy, with his strong spirit of uncompromising independence, his profound learning, and finally his controversial dislike of that narrow dogmatism which was then looked upon as orthodoxy. That is one side of the man, and if 'Paradise Lost' had been written in 1645 I imagine its character would have been very different and far less attractive, but when Milton came to write it the times, as well as the circumstances of his life, had changed.

Thus I anticipate the question which may fairly be asked, How is it, that when both in the second and third divisions of the poet's life the strongest antipathies to certain political tendencies, certain ecclesiastical conditions, and not less certain theological dogmas, seem to have been the dominant note both in his character and in all his other writings they hardly appear, or if they do, are hardly notice-

able, in his greatest works, 'Paradise Lost,' 'Paradise Regained,' and 'Samson Agonistes'? I am bound, I grant, at least to offer some explanation for a circumstance which has in the past led men to distrust the poet as of unstable mind, and has detracted, and must detract, if not justified, from the sense of oneness and even orderly development in his character and ideas. My answer to such a question is simply this: All his strongest and most bitter animosities, his pet theories and his most dominant beliefs, do appear again and again in those works, but, as I have already suggested, they appear in the less obvious form of poetic allegory, none the less deep and intense because they have been modified by time and experience, and are legible only to his initiated readers, under the cloak of magnificent verse and imagery.

The last poetical work which Milton has left us is 'Samson Agonistes.' We can almost see Milton composing the work which tells his life's story. We picture the old man, who knows his Bible almost by heart, listening to the passage being read to him one day, when, suddenly, there flashes upon him the similarity between the Hebrew champion Samson and himself. Strong beyond the men of his day; successful and praised; triumphant over his foes and dreaded by them; betrayed by a woman, and crushed in consequence; deprived of his sight; despised by his enemies, and neglected by his former associates; in old age poor and sad, yet strong and eager for the work of fighting for what he conceives to be national righteousness, and willing to die in the effort to promote the freedom of his country; all this, charac-

teristic of Samson, he feels true of himself. How may he better give this his testament to the world than by writing a tragedy, in which he is the real hero, based on the story of Samson?

He begins his preface with a suitable hint as to the meaning of the tragedy:

"Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriae, etc., per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem." Then comes the tragedy of his own life:

> "Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
> As of a person seperate to God,
> Design'd for great exploits; if I must die
> Betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,
> Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;"

As he looks back over his life and sees how others, far less gifted than himself, have escaped, he realises that his very gifts have proved dangerous to him.

> "Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
> And proves the source of all my miseries;
> So many, and so huge, that each apart
> Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
> O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
> Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
> Dungeon, or beggery, or decrepit age!
> Light the prime work of God to me is extinct,
> And all her various objects of delight
> Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd."

Then he thinks of how his old friends have neglected and deserted him in his sorrow, and cries in his bitterness:

> "How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
> Bear in their superscription (of the most
> I would be understood) in prosperous days

They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought."

Milton's conspicuous honesty was far too great, however, for him to be able to avoid looking his own misdeeds in the face and recognising his own share in his troubles, and so he adds just that touch to the picture of the afflicted Samson which makes the two characters have all in common. Had he not wedded a bride from the enemy's camp? Had not his own folly helped to undo him and take the heart out of the best years of his life? He asks himself—

"Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble."

After which he bethinks him how Mary Powell had managed to obtain a sudden interview with him, and how she had acknowledged her fault with tears and had been pardoned; possibly even the memory of subsequent trouble, may have embittered his conception of Delilah. We seem to recognise Milton's first wife in the words:

"With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
May expiate, etc. . . .
But conjugal affection,
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate."

Yet the honest thinker will not throw all the blame on the woman; he wishes to be absolutely straightforward with himself:

"She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who vanquished with a peal of words (O weakness!)
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman."

To him the Philistine represents the common enemy, the Jesuit influence at Court, and it is not Samson alone but Milton who realises the truth of the accusation:

"In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast amiss."

And gladly and willingly he accepts the impeachment, but inasmuch as he has done what he did for the people that he loves, and from whom he has a right to expect support and appreciation, yet seeks it in vain, he upbraids the leaders of England who have been so weak as to submit to the "Restoration," and have thus been party to the circumstances which had compelled Milton to seek safety in hiding. Israel is England, and the "governors" he alludes to were those in charge of the State at the time of the return of Charles II.

"That fault I take on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,
Who seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors
Acknowledged no, or not at all consider'd,
Deliverance offer'd: I on the other side
Used no ambition to commend my deeds;
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer;
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length

Their Lords the Philistines, with gathered power,
Entered Judea seeking me, who then safe to the rock
of Etham was retired
Not flying, but forecasting in what place
To set upon them, what advantag'd best."

For his own part he acknowledges the justice of his blindness for his many sins against God :

"Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly ; I myself have brought them on,
Sole author I, sole cause."

Therefore he does not lament for himself alone ; it is rather for the cause that his want of wisdom has indirectly injured. He speaks of himself, surely, when he says :

"To God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths
Of idolists and atheists."

And as he thinks of the triumph of the late King's sons (whom he calls the sons of Anak) over him, and of how once men, far from insulting, looked up to and feared his caustic pen, yet now can afford to despise him, life seems to have few attractions left for him :

"But as for life,
To what end should I seek it? When in strength
All mortals I excell'd and great in hopes
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heaven foretold, and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,
Fearless of danger like a petty god
I walked about admired of all, and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring me affront."

Yet sitting in the doorway of his house pondering the meaning of his life, and longing to be of some use, he soliloquises:

"Now blind, disheartened, sham'd, dishonor'd, quell'd,
To what can I be useful, wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heav'n impos'd,
But to sit idle on the household hearth
A burd'nous drone; to visitants a gaze,
Or pity'd object, these redundant locks
Robustious to no purpose clustring down,
Vain monument of strength; till length of years
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure?"

This could never be, strictly speaking, said of Samson, though true of Milton. Next comes a dramatic picture—one of the bitterest experiences of his life. No doubt it was no secret that the leader of the Romanising party in this country—the figure-head of the movement—the King's brother, a professed Romanist, wanted to see Milton. It would, of course, be reported to Milton by those who delighted to wound him in what contemptuous terms the Duke was apt to speak of him, and as he mused thereon and of his powerlessness to retaliate, he longs for death—he experiences for a moment a "sense of Heaven's desertion."

"I was his nursling once;
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against th' uncircumcised, our enemies:
But now hath cast me off as never known,

And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated,
The subject of their cruelty and scorn."

Then, possibly in such a moment of despondency, there came to him the Duke of York, taunting him with his blindness as a just punishment from God. Thus does Milton paraphrase his words:

"Presume not on thy God, what'er he be,
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people . . .
Fair honor that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause
A Murderer, a Revolter and a Robber"!

It is possible that the taunt evoked more than the generally reported answer, but whether he uttered it or not, to his own conscience we may well believe that the justification was what he puts into the mouth of Samson. Milton, let it be remembered, had been arrested though afterwards released:

"My nation was subjected to your lords.
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquer'd can.
But I a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
Single rebellion and did hostile acts.
I was no private but a person raised
With strength sufficient and command from Heaven
To free my country; if their servile minds
Me their deliverer sent would not receive
. . . . . .
Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve."

Then, conscious of having somewhat disconcerted the Duke by his answer and allusion to his father, Charles I, he pictures the Duke's return and the malice which his proud foe will attempt to vent upon him:

> "His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,
> Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
> And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe."

And he soliloquises:

> "He will directly to the lords, I fear,
> And with malicious counsel stir them up
> Some way or other yet further to afflict me."

But quickly recovers himself with the thought that the Duke dare not mention the reason of his animosity against him and that he has no other good grounds for attack, and that moreover—

> "Much more affliction than already felt
> They cannot well impose, nor I sustain.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
> My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
> The worst that he can give, to me the best."

After this last attack he begins solemnly to face the death he has been so earnestly invoking. Before he dies he will accomplish something, do some great work. He tells us:

> "I begin to feel
> Some rousing motions in me which dispose
> To something extraordinary my thoughts.
> If there be aught of presage in the mind,
> This day will be remarkable in my life
> By some great act, or of my days the last."

But whatever happens he must be himself to the last, always behaving and acting "as ever in his great taskmaster's sight":

> "Happen what may, of me expect to hear.
> Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy
> Our God, our law, my nation, or myself;"

In that spirit the brave old warrior can prophetically speak of his last moments, can sing of himself, full of deep personal satisfaction:

> "All this
> With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
> But favoring and assisting to the end.
> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail."

In choosing 'Samson Agonistes' as a means of demonstrating that Milton and his times are the subjects of Milton's poems, I have chosen the work in which the fact is most obviously brought out, and the one in which there can be little to cavil at, but it is equally possible to illustrate the same fact in his other works, though the process is more involved and requires many additional explanations; but whether we take the earlier poems or sonnets, or the greater works (excepting, of course, the Latin translations), there is ample evidence to show that each one was the product of some specific impulse, and that each veils some personal experience, to which Milton wishes to give expression and to render living. So far there seems to be no work of Milton's, either in prose or in verse, which could be strictly considered a religious one, in the sense of having been written to convey any direct religious teaching.

Certainly the 'Ode on the Morning of the Nativity' might be classified as such; but it seems to me to be rather the outburst of passionate youth re-acting from the conventions of Puritanism in its hardest form, than a theological dissertation. That such was never Milton's *rôle* is apparent from the fact that he had to give up, and never attempted to complete, his poem on the 'Passion.' I shall be asked, What, then, of 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained'? Of these we have to speak.

It will probably, by this time, have become evident to my hearers that not only was each work of Milton's, whether in prose or poetry, the product of some predisposing stimulus, but that the stimulus was in each case some human experience through which either he or his country had passed. This is particularly evidenced in his poetic works. The intense personality, amounting almost to vanity, of a work like 'Samson Agonistes' would, to some, argue the failing mental power of the old poet, and would only indicate to us the surviving forces of his greatest passion. Elsewhere, if we are to find the man behind the poem, we shall have to look deeper and enter more carefully into the imaginativeness of the blind (and therefore more subtly ideal) poet's greatest thoughts. We have already seen, in 'Samson Agonistes,' that whilst the story of Samson has been used as an envelope to wrap up the autobiography which he leaves to the world, the actual facts of the life of Samson are altered and enlarged upon, and in many cases new facts are introduced which would not seem to be in strict accordance with the story as we know it. Probably the power and

beauty of the tragedy lies not so much in the form, or in its association with Samson, as in the touch of nature which is everywhere apparent,—in its human passions, in its heroism, and in its fascinating imaginativeness, which are again and again in touch with our own feelings and make us realise the fund of human experience which it contains.

In taking this view of the meaning and scope of 'Samson Agonistes' I am not singular, for though on its first statement I found many who were not prepared at once to accept this interpretation as final, and who even desired me not to state it, yet on further reading I find that others have at least hinted, if not stated, the same thing, and even the immortal Masson has taken no less definite a stand on the subject than I have ventured to do; he says: "The story of Samson must have seemed to Milton a metaphor or allegory of much of his own life in its later stages. He also, in his veteran days, after the Restoration, was a champion at bay, a prophet-warrior left alone among men of a different faith and different manners—Philistines who exulted in the ruin of his cause. . . . He also was blind, as Samson had been, . . . Like Samson, too, he had been substantially a Nazarite. . . . Like Samson, he had married a Philistine woman, not one of his own tribe, and having no thoughts or interests in common with his own; and like Samson, he had suffered indignities from his wife and her relations, till he had learned to rue the match. . . . In short, there must have rushed upon Milton, contemplating in his later life the story of Samson among the Philistines, so many similarities with his

own case that there is little wonder that he then selected the subject for poetic treatment. While writing 'Samson Agonistes' he must have been secretly conscious that throughout he was representing much of his own feelings and experience, and the reader of the poem that knows anything of Milton's life has this pressed upon him at every turn."*

If 'Samson Agonistes' is the story of Milton's own experiences and spiritual aspirations wrapped up in an Old Testament garment, may it not be that 'Paradise Lost' relates, though in a deeper and less obvious way, the experiences and the aspirations of the Nation, clothed in the story so apt and so common amongst poets of the time.

It would hardly be possible to imagine Milton choosing for his theme any other subject than a scriptural one. The power that his early life exercised over him, the intensity of his devotion to the Bible, which grew stronger as the years passed on, made him more and more, in his latter years, the man of one book, though possibly at the same time the master of many. To him the Bible was the court of ultimate appeal, and the only sure guide as to the future. If, by a comparison of the experiences of the nation with those of early created man, he could find hope for the future, then that hope would be worth having, not otherwise, and if the triumphs of the forces of adversity in his own country could be shown to have their types in the Biblical personalities, who were at one time powerful, then vanquished,

* Masson's edition of 'Milton's Poetical Works,' vol. iii. pp. 87 and 88.

yet ultimately triumphant, then why not accept the help and encouragement that the analogy offered?

The poet gives us a very clear hint as to his own beliefs in the matter:

> "Though what if earth
> Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
> Each to other like more than on earth is thought?"

If Milton be true to himself in the most intense and intellectual hours of his life, the impressions and experiences of his momentous rise and fall, the pains and disasters which have befallen his own nation, the triumph of his enemies, and the religious and political outlook, cannot be absent from the great poetic drama which for so many years it had been the ambition of his life to produce. The whole atmosphere of his life is religious, the language which he speaks is the language of Scripture; the illustrations which come to hand most readily are taken from the Bible, and the deepest and most profound truths are enshrined in those pages. Therefore, whatever be his main purpose, it would be inconceivable that anything which Milton wrote after going blind (a circumstance which more than ever threw him back on the comforts and support of religion) could take any other form than a scriptural one.

What, then, was Milton's purpose in writing 'Paradise Lost'? To convey what we should now call the Gospel Message of Salvation? Surely not. His tone and work in life had never been of that sort. The theme was not even a new one. Those who would be likely to read and appreciate him

would be the Puritans, and they were in no doubt about these fundamental truths of their religion. Nowhere else in his writings does such purely religious teaching show itself except in the 'Ode to the Nativity,' which, as I have already pointed out, does not affect the position either way, and the poem on 'The Passion,' which, from the fact that he gave it up as beyond him, and never afterwards attempted to finish it, tends to make the student disinclined to believe that the spirit of Milton was, essentially, what would be now called strongly evangelical.

Milton tells us why he wrote; his great object, he says, is:

> "That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal Providence
> And justify the ways of God to Men."

Was it then asserted in Milton's days that the ways of God were unjust? On the contrary, never was there a time in English history when amongst Christian people such a matter was less debated from the point of view of God's relation to His people. Both schools of thought, whether Catholic or collective, which included the Roman and Anglican sections of the community, the Puritan or individualistic bodies, which numbered all the other Protestant communities except the Church of England, both held but one view, viz. that God's law and God's will were perfect, and that all man had to do was to humbly submit to both; that if things seemed to lack order or justice, it was only man's ignorance that rendered him incapable of recognising the fact, and

his own evil nature that prevented him appreciating and admiring it. These were not days in which men troubled to reason as to the claims of man on God. That phase of speculative intellectualism has been reserved for a more sceptical age. If, then, in a day when the only theological idea of any real importance was the goodness and love of God in having made a way of escape for the self-destroyed sinner, and no one doubted the justice of God in that respect, why should the theme have been so soul-absorbing to the mind of Milton, who, in his former theological works, had laid very little emphasis on the point, and who had again and again declared his opinion that it was not for man to argue, but for man to obey? In my chapter on Milton in 'The Growth of Religious Ideals,' it is pointed out that the poet's conceptions of the "life to come," whatever they may have been in theory, were in practice rather vague. That the "world to come" did not loom up before him in nearly such great proportions as did the facts of this life is evident, and the best he can say is—

> "Yet one doubt
> Pursues me still, least all I cannot die;
> Least that pure breath of life, the spirit of man
> Which God inspired, cannot together perish
> With this corporeal clod."

Of course, in writing these words, as we can easily see, his thoughts went back to his own prose works in which he had so dogmatically declared that there was no such thing as natural immortality, but that unless by the gift of Christ on death, body and

soul alike perished. It is true that a measure of sorrow, a sense of personal insufficiency and time for reflection, were, about the year 1660, beginning to modify his views. But, modified or not, they do not point to a great and overwhelming realisation of the "life to come." That he had no intention of disputing the generally accepted view of God's dealing with the soul of a man after death, is clear from his own words:—

> "Him who disobeys,
> Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day
> Cast out from God and blessed union falls
> Into utter darkness deep engulfed, his place
> Ordained, without redemption, without end."

Thus far, then, there is nothing to justify in the ways of God. Milton did not raise up mere chimeras to destroy them. He was the child of the time, he was the prophet in Israel to whom men came. The oracles of God, which he felt himself called upon to dispense, were those which concerned the very real needs of the men of his time.

If, however, we assume that the political circumstances of the day, the vices, the irreligion, the political trickery and the sufferings to which the God-fearing Puritans were subjected, made men cry out, "How long, O God"? and that the sudden fall from power and happiness which had come upon the pious though narrow Puritan followers of the Cromwellian conception of righteousness, made these good men crave for light on the subject of the justice and power of God, then we see some meaning in the poet's declaration. It ought not to be difficult to perceive also how such men as Milton, conscious of

their deep disinterestedness, their absolute longing to face everything for their country's good, in a prayerful and almost cringing attitude before God, when they saw, in a few short weeks, the whole structure which they thought God himself had been using them to construct, dashed down, and the grim horrors of the world, the flesh, and the devil mocking them, as it were, could not refrain from asking: "Can this be of God"? To such a question the old poet-prophet would feel himself called to give an answer.

The Restoration had come suddenly, so suddenly that no party in the State was either ready for, or expected it, and the year 1659, in which such an event became possible, was really one of national anarchy and reaction. Milton remained Latin Secretary to Richard Cromwell for the five months of his rule, and consequently can have had little time or inclination to settle down to so great a work, but when the crisis was over, and he had said good-bye to his connection with the State, he was free, nay, by circumstances, as we have seen, compelled to work at something that should be for the good of his country.

Well we know that he had, in the years 1641 and 1642, planned a number of subjects from which to work out his great epic; those subjects were doubtless in many cases taken from plays or works which he had read or heard. Yet in the end he selects none of them, though even as early as 1642 the notes made by him indicate that the one prominent idea in all the scheme before him is intimately connected with the political and social events that

were taking place. In 1659 he goes back to his "first love," and the blind man, as he ponders over the events of his life, remembers that occasion when the first enthusiasm for writing a national epic had come upon him as he read, under the guidance of the author's champion, Tasso's 'Geruselamme Liberata.'

Would that not serve to make him reconsider whether, under the guidance of God, the much-loved land that was the only Jerusalem he yearned after, might not yet be delivered? If so, the hearts of men must be kept brave; there must be hope instilled into them. Might it not be that God had closed the door of State upon him for that very object, in order that he might open another and a more effectual one? May not, too, his great desire to have this work published account for the small sum he was ready to accept for the MS.?

Possibly there may be another reason why Milton took up this theme and why he entitled it 'Paradise Lost.'

Amongst his familiar letters is one to Henry Oldenburg, who had written to him with the suggestion that he should devote himself to recording the political disasters which had fallen upon the country. That took place late in the year 1659, at the time when men were just feeling the first force of the calamity which had befallen them, and Milton's answer is characteristic of the impulsive poet. He seems to say: "We have no time to lament, something needs doing. God cannot fail; He must sooner or later] bring the right to pass, no matter how impossible it may seem now."

To Henry Oldenburg. (*'Familiar Letters,' No.* 29.)
WESTMINSTER, December 20th, 1659.

" . . . Of any such work as compiling the history of our political troubles, which you seem to advise, I have no thought whatever (*longe absum*) ; they are worthier of silence than of commemoration. What is needed is not one to compile a good history of our troubles, but one who can happily end the troubles themselves; for, with you, I fear lest, amid these our civil discords, or rather sheer madnesses, we shall seem to be likely confederated enemies of Liberty and Religion, a too fit object of attack, tho' in truth, they have not yet inflicted a severer wound on Religion than we ourselves have been long doing by our crimes. But God, as I hope, on His own account, and for His own glory, now in question, will not allow the counsels and onsets of the enemy to succeed as they themselves wish, whatever convulsions kings and cardinals meditate and design."—Introduction to the works of J. Milton. Corson, p. 93.

It is well in this connection to bear in mind that Milton's intellectual calibre was far beyond the average, and that, in consequence, the irreconcilable theological contradictions which occur in his work cannot have escaped his attention. Those contradictions cease to perplex or to disturb the student as soon as he grasps that the allusions are to mundane and material events and persons rather than to Spiritual and Divine beings.

The cosmogony and anthropology of 'Paradise Lost' fails utterly to justify the ways of God to man, if by those "ways" are intended His ultimate restoration of the human soul; but, when interpreted as relating to the political, religious, and social conditions of the times, there is nothing that

could have seemed to the great mind of Milton, as to ourselves, either incongruous or unreal. The religious spirit is not absent, but the poem is not primarily intended to be either didactic or evangelical.

To attempt at this distance of time to unravel all the nuances of parable and allegory, which even in Milton's day required to be so hidden, that, whilst obvious to those who were entrusted with the key they could always bear another interpretation such as should make the poem escape the vengeance which would have followed a direct attack upon the powers that were, would be to expect too much; yet there is much that we can see the meaning of if we wish to. Obviously the hero, or perhaps better, the villain of the poem is Satan. From beginning to end the thoughts of the poet are fixed on this one point. Satan, to Milton, represents Rome, the Rome he hated, the Rome that he knew as the persecutor, the sustainer of the Inquisition, the goal and aim of all the Jesuit plots, the power which he so much dreaded. To us who have learned to look at these differences of opinion in a calmer and more Christian way, these violent diatribes, these bitter conceptions, or even misconceptions, whatever be our religious persuasion, raise a smile, but in Milton's day it was no matter to smile over—it meant life and death. It was a struggle of the bitterest kind indeed to him; it meant the difference between liberty and freedom for England, if not, indeed, her very existence as a nation. Under such circumstances it would not be either honest or fair to the man himself to smooth down any of those party bitternesses which were so

obviously part of his very nature, and which appear and reappear everywhere. Many who even belong to the very church which he so violently attacks, whilst differing with him *in toto*, will appreciate him all the more because of the transparent honesty of his enmity. The Roman Church, then, and all connected with her, is the theme of Milton, and the liberation of England from her toils is the ideal at which he aims, as well as the picture which he delineates.

How unlike is the Satan of Milton to any other arch-fiend, whether he be the Prince of Darkness as portrayed by Dante and the mediaeval schoolmen, by Vondel, or the Italian writers who had preceded him in such large numbers, by Goethe, who followed him, or even to the conventional devil of our own times! The devils of other writers are wicked, desperately wicked, coarse and crude monsters. Milton's Satan is of a different stamp. This is because Milton knew Rome and her magnificence, far more truly than most Protestant and especially Puritan controversialists. Had he not had exceptional opportunities? The Cardinal Barberini! The treasures of the Vatican, not to mention Hortensius! The *entrée* to the best Roman society, and not least, the personal friendship of the Marquis Manso. All these had helped to mould his conception of the great power that was at once ecclesiastical and civil, religious and political, or, as he would have put it, preaching Christ but acting the devil. The Scripture symbolism just suits Milton's needs. His demon must have a spiritual nature, must at one time in his early state have been in a condition of purity. Well does he recognise the

plea of the Romish priest, that the Protestant, nay, any other Church, was but some new phase of heresy, which, like all the rest, would have its day and perish, whereas she, the very creation of Christ, was divine from her very foundation. Yes! answers Milton, I grant the origin, but however beautiful, however noble that origin, she fell through pride, and unwillingness to keep close to God's Word and His Will, and in falling has dragged down one third of God's servants; for, with the precise knowledge which Milton possessed, he had reached that intellectual stage which we have hardly yet passed, of classifying the Christian world into Greeks, Romans, and Protestants:

> "Who first broke peace in Heav'n and faith, till then
> Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
> Drew after him the third part of heav'n's sons
> Conjured against the Highest."

It is interesting, too, in this connection to notice how Satan, true to the type Milton has in his mind, gradually degenerates. It is needless to quote from the work itself to show how in the first book as well as in the second the character of Satan is more elevated and grander in every respect than in the later books. He grows meaner as the time passes. It cannot be mere coincidence that such was essentially the history of the Papacy in earlier times. Bishop Creighton's work brings this out most clearly.

Before leaving this very cursory review of the character of Milton's Satan, it may be well to point out that a very remarkable and suggestive thought is to be found in the description which Milton gives

of the objective of Satan's warfare. Unlike the rest of the writers of similar works in his own century he does not make Satan fight directly against God. That naturally is consequent, but in the first place the warfare is against Michael and his angels, against his fellow spirits, neither against man nor God. If Milton meant anything by his description, assuredly he meant that in the arch-enemy of England's national freedom he saw one, who was fighting, not so much to oppose God, as to beat down the other churches, the other spiritual forces of Christendom, against the spirit of pure religion and all that to him was associated with it.

We now pass from the revelation of Satan, to the new creation. Whom does Milton intend by Adam and Eve? That this new creation represents the Protestant Christian world there can be little doubt. He shows them as happy in their simple and guileless love of God and pure informal worship; knowing but little, but simply guided by God's word. In the midst of an idolatrous world they alone are made after the likeness of God, and as such are the envy of the Arch-Demon. Adam, of whom Milton says, "For contemplation he and valour formed," probably is especially intended to represent the English people, whilst Eve—"For softness she and sweet attractive grace'—may well serve for the Christian ministers of England. At any rate Milton feels that in speaking of the Protestants of England and the faithful ministry, he is speaking of men and women who are unlike the world around them and who live on a much higher plane:

> "Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps
> Not spirits, yet to heav'nly spirits bright
> Little inferior."

The Church depicted by him, however, is not to rule the nation; the Church is to serve. It is the business of the magistrate, so he says, to watch over the interests of the Church, but ministers are to serve, and the only law is to be the will of their Maker. What a remarkable picture of the ideal Puritan combination of Church and State Milton draws:

> "Two of far nobler shape erect, and tall,
> God-like erect, with native honour clad
> Naked in native majesty, seemed lords of all
> And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine
> The image of their glorious Maker shone,
> Truth, wisdom, sanctitude, severe and pure.
> Severe, but in true filial freedom placed
> Whence true authority in men; though both
> Not equal, as their sex not equal, seemed."

This Archangel ruined, would appeal strongly to the Puritan who lamented the fact that the Church, which was represented by the Bishop of Rome, had fallen from pristine grace. Hence Milton's Satan is neither material nor immaterial. There is the curious combination to be noticed here, which can only have a real meaning when we understand it to describe that Church which the poet depicts, as neither entirely unspiritual nor yet spiritual, a blending of a spiritual hierarchy with a worldly state. Satan is "Hell's dread emperor":

"High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,
Satan exalted sat."

and in accordance with Roman practice, his court are princes :

"The Stygian council thus dissolved ; and forth
In order came the grand infernal peers
Midst came their mighty paramount, and seemed
Alone th' antagonist of heav'n, nor less
Than hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme
And God-like imitated state."

And lest we should doubt, he proceeds to picture the brilliant bodyguard which in days gone by accompanied the chief Pontiff on his way.

Satan, entering Paradise and overhearing the conversation of our first parents, is descriptive of the Jesuit action in sending spies into the ministry of the Church of England. The war which is taking place is surely the war between the Royalists and the Puritans. Uriel, on a sunbeam coming to warn men, can be none other than the poet himself uttering his warnings by means of the illuminating influence of the Press. It is in the night that Eve is tempted; this is hardly scriptural, but it is nevertheless true, for the dark times of the Restoration were times of great temptation to the clergy, and, moreover, like Gabriel's precautions, all the safeguards erected by the Puritans had broken down. Satan enters Eden by an underground stream, which has little meaning if it does not represent the plots and schemes which have been set on foot to bring about the Restoration, whilst another analogy of the

Restoration is the picture of Satan's rally after his fall. How graphically does Milton describe the day on which the terrible decision to recall the King was arrived at; to him it was the death sentence of the English nation.

> "This day's death pronounced, if aught I see
> Will prove no sudden, but a slow paced evil,
> A long day's dying to augment our pain."

Michael seems to represent Cromwell and pure religion, whilst Hell is the Inquisition or its spirit—

> "A universe of death, which God by curse
> Created evil, for evil only good."

In the limited space of this paper it is impossible to carry the comparison further on the lines hitherto adopted, but it will, I trust, become increasingly clear to my hearers that the Biblical aspect of the poem is but the scaffolding upon which Milton builds the structure of his magnificent historical and political epic. A careful student versed in the political and social history of Milton's day will not find it difficult to recognise that in the two great works, 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained' we have the history of those times no less than Milton's aspirations and prophecies for the England he loved, veiled in poetic allegory, based on Scripture.

Possibly in some future paper I may be allowed to deal with the two greater poetical works of Milton in a similar manner to the way I have treated 'Samson Agonistes,' but for the moment I must ask you to accept, so far as you can, the statement, that throughout they will bear without straining the interpretation I am putting upon them.

I have but lightly touched on the tremendously involved and difficult theme of interpreting the mind of so imaginative a man as Milton, but should I, in doing so, have roused the ill-will of anyone present, may I ask them to pause before they decry what I have little doubt time and further study will show to be based on a wonderfully firm foundation. Whilst it was easy for Milton to make his meaning clear when, as in 'Samson Agonistes,' he speaks of himself and his own sorrows, or refers only to religious matters, when it came to the question of national and political concerns the ground was more dangerous, and the meaning required to be more mystically expressed, for at no time did Milton consider that he was serving either his God or his country by endangering his own life unnecessarily. Yet, notwithstanding the subtlety of the subject, there seems to have been an impression current that more was meant by the writer than appears on the first perusal of the text. Even Masson, who has given another and, to many, an unsatisfying explanation of these two poems, is apparently forced to concede something. "To suppose," says this author, "that Milton could have put forth any poem of large extent uninformed by his deepest and most serious philosophy of life and of the world, is to know nothing whatever about him."* Let my hearers ask themselves, what other philosophy of life had Milton, than that which he again and again expresses in his prose writings? Or, again, as Masson says:

* Masson's 'Milton's Poetical Works,' vol. ii, p. 47.

"The ingenious construction of a fiction that should anyhow entertain the world, and which the author might behold floating away detached from himself . . . this was not his notion of poesy. Into whatever he wrote he was sure to put as much of himself as possible; and into that work which he intended to be his greatest, it would have been safe to predict that he would studiously put the most of of himself."*

Yet if my view be wrong, Masson is also wrong, for according to his own writings there is more of Milton in 'Samson Agonistes' than in 'Paradise Lost.'

After pointing out in his introduction to 'Paradise Lost' that it is what the Germans call a Vorstellung *i. e.* a popular image or representation, but not a Begriff, *i. e.* a pure or philosophic notion, Masson adds:

"He more than once inserts in the poem passages cautioning the reader that his descriptions and narratives of supramundane scenes and events are not to be taken literally, but only symbolically.†—*Vide* Book v, 563–576.

A curious confirmation of the statement I have made, that hints are not wanting to show that soon after the death of Milton the historical meaning of the poem was understood, comes to us from a somewhat rare book which has fallen into my hands. In 1690 or 1691 Milton's 'Eikonoclastes' was reprinted in Amsterdam and circulated in this country, whereupon a reply was written and published in London during 1692 by one of those who had been in close touch with the Court of Charles II.

* *Ibid.* † *Ibid.*

It is entitled 'Vindiciae Carolinae.' Once only the author alludes to the person of Milton, and those words have a bearing on our subject, indicating the opinion of the time that Charles II was referred to in the work known as 'Paradise Lost.' I quote :—

"That he (Milton) wrote good Latin will be readily granted, but with this remark, that it was Billingsgate in Rome : as also that he was a person of a large thought and wanted not words to express those conceptions, but never so truly as when the argument and his depraved temper met together. Witness his 'Paradise Lost,' where he makes the Devil, who, though fallen, had not given up Heaven for lost, speak at that rate himself would have done of the Son of this Royal Martyr (upon his Restoration) had he thought it convenient."

M. Edmond Scherer, who has a right to our reverent consideration, with that almost feminine intuition which Frenchmen sometimes possess, speaking of 'Paradise Lost,' says :

"Now it turns out that the idea of the poem will not bear examination ; that his solution for the problem of evil (in spite of the splendid lines addressed to the Sun, in Book IV) is almost burlesque ; that the character of his heroes, Jehovah and Satan, have no coherence ; that what happens to Adam interests us but little ; finally, that the action takes place in regions where the interest and passions of our common humanity can have no scope."

The writing of most men who have seriously studied the writings of Milton as a whole bear abundant testimony to the unsatisfactoriness of a purely subjective interpretation of the words and characters of the Biblical personalities in Milton's

poetical writings, and if more were needed I can but refer to the charming paper which was read recently by our honoured Fellow, Mr. Pember. Surely if this be true we need not hesitate to look around for a more consistent and satisfactory explanation than that which none of us on consideration can entirely accept.

Thus in Milton's works, written after his college days, whether prose or poetry, we find little that, in the narrower sense of the word, could be called "religious teaching," yet the more we read him the more impressed we must be with the deep reality of his religious spirit. His was an heroic nature. He was a God-made giant, if not in physical form, yet at least in mind and in spirit, and though intellectually he grew, none the less he was consistent throughout.

I shall, of course, be reminded that during the greater portion of his active life he attended no place of worship regularly; that he belonged to no party, and that he had no appointed time for prayer. In answer, I do not propose to take refuge in the excuse that owing to his blindness he was unable to attend public worship, or enter into the usual religious life of the time. We must at least believe that this great thinker would have repudiated such a petty course. His action, let us say at once, was deliberate, and actuated by the highest motives. No Church in his own day could satisfy his aspirations. What in others—in men of less gigantic spiritual and intellectual grasp—would have been reprehensible, in him was sheer necessity. Surely we shall grant that that life is most Christian

in which devotion is so interwoven with all its functions that prayer and worship go on without ceasing. Milton we know, certainly in his later years, leavened all his thoughts, studies, words and works with habitual prayer. The Church was his own heart. It was a "Holy ecclesia"—a calling together of all the powers and affections to sacred service.

In saying this I do not feel that I am alone, for is it not Wordsworth who says:

> "We must be free or die
> Who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spoke,
> The faith and morals hold which Milton held"?

There are many things happening to-day which make me wonder whether the Utopias which Milton put forth to the world of his own day are not far more to us than we are prepared to admit. In his 'Essay on Education' are to be found maxims which the Board of Education are even now aiming after, whilst his conception of a National Church, which should embrace every man and woman and child in the country, is an ideal which is more deeply desired by this generation than it has been by any other. It is possible, nay, probable, that here and there, under the stinging forces of injustice and persecution, Milton may have written some things with which, in these days, we cannot quite agree, but even in such cases there is much to make us think that he himself modified those opinions in later years. Surely it were ignoble of us, in this generation, to take note of such small matters when the man, taken in his entirety, stands out as he does as one of the noblest and bravest and most brilliant characters that this land

has ever known. To the voice of God, as he found it in the Holy Scriptures, he was always attentive and obedient, and the study of those Scriptures was the earnest employment of his life, and though his character was superficially hard and uncompromising, it was framed on the patriarchal pattern and was thoroughly pure. As one great writer has said of him: "He was substantially a saint of the antique Hebrew class." As poet, patriot, scholar, teacher and thinker we might expatiate *ad infinitum* on the splendours of a nature like Milton's, and rejoice interminably that we may claim him as one of the brightest stars in the firmament of English national life. To his personal character there can be no finer testimony than that of his widow, who, on being asked to explain how it was Milton did all he did, merely replied that each night he was visited by the Holy Spirit. Possibly there was more truth in this remark than even the speaker intended. Certain I am that the last word has not been spoken on the prophetic aspect of much that Milton wrote, but space and time do not allow of more, and I will therefore sum up by quoting some words from Symmons' 'Life of Milton':

"With the eloquent Macaulay, who can study either the life or writings of the great poet and patriot, without aspiring to emulate, not indeed his sublime works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he laboured for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptation and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to tyrants, and the faith which he solemnly kept with his country and his fame?"

'PARADISE REGAINED.'

BY PROFESSOR EDWARD DOWDEN, LITT.D., D.C.L.

Milton betrayed some jealousy on behalf of the beauty of his younger daughter, 'Paradise Regained.' She walked in her greater sister's train, and came to be regarded by some as an attendant rather than as a sister. Less great than 'Paradise Lost' the later poem unquestionably is; it does not range from hell, through chaos and the world, to heaven; the loyal and rebel angels do not clash together in fieriest onset; Satan has lost in a far greater degree than when confronting Gabriel in the garden his original brightness; except in a brief episode where Mary communes with her own heart womanhood is here unrepresented. But 'Paradise Regained' has some compensating advantages; the action—a duel in a series of encounters—is impressively single, yet varied in its process; at no point does the interest flag; the only episode is a needful pause and resting place before renewal of the combat; the passion of the strife broadens and deepens to the close; and may it not be mentioned as an excellence that the Almighty after a short prologue, which announces the trial of strengths, is not loquacious

with argument, explanation, or apologia? After the monarch has opened the lists there is a swift angelic flourish of trumpets, and presently the gage is thrown down, and all our interest is concentrated on the two antagonists.

The title—'Paradise Regained'—was determined by antithesis with the title of the greater epic 'Paradise Lost,' and we need not inquire too curiously why Milton regarded the trial in the wilderness, with its triumphant issue, as equivalent to the final redemption of mankind by the Son of Man. We learn from the Father's words that if Milton had written a poem of Redemption on a larger scale, the Tragedy of the Powers of Hell would have consisted of three acts. The Saviour, before his work was complete, had to quell three grand adversaries. One of these was Satan, the chief and leader of the rebel host, and himself representative of all its powers. His defeat in the wilderness was absolute; there could never again be question as to who was the true suzerain and lord paramount from whom mankind held in fief. But among the powers of Hell beside the angelic host were two monstrous creatures, the one sprung direct from Satan alone, the other from Satan by incestuous commixture with his ill offspring; two abortions, the snaky sorceress Sin and the goblin Death. These also Jesus must overthrow before man can be redeemed. The second act of the tragedy would have been the conquest of sin by the crucified Jesus. The third, the conquest of death by the risen Jesus. In the wildernesses, declares the Almighty in what I have styled his prologue, Jesus—

> "shall first lay down the rudiments
> Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
> To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
> By humiliation and strong sufferance."

When Satan, smitten with amazement, fell—and neither by iteration of the word nor by simile pursuing simile can Milton succeed in exhausting the height and depth and terror of that fall (iv, 562–581)—the final issue was potentially attained; he fell only to bring to his rebel crew—

> "Joyless triumphals of his hoped success,
> Ruin, and desperation, and dismay."

The ruin of sin and death was already assured. Jesus of the gentle brow, and meek regard, is now known to be the dreadful foeman, whose arrows and chariot-wheels in ages long past had overwhelmed the whole rebel host.

It was to the advantage of his poem that Milton was one of those whom the Athanasian creed condemns to perdition. Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah and the first-begotten Son; but the first-begotten Son, in the theology of Milton, is a creature, and possesses that liberty of choice which is the essential condition of true virtue in a creature. The duel in the wilderness is no piece of stage fencing with blunted rapiers. We must accept the fact that Jesus might have been worsted; or, if it is impossible to suppose this, the impossibility arises from his virtue, not from the Godhead equal to the Father's, which was never his. He is a young man, of heroic temper, with amplitude of mind to greatest deeds, aware of his supernatural birth, conscious of

that high mission which has now had heavenly attestation, his whole heart aflame with ardour for the public good. Had he been born a Roman his virtue would have been a Roman virtue; he would have been the fellow of Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus. But Jesus being a Jew, his virtue is, at the roots, essentially Hebraic, not classical; it resides in obedience more than in aught else, and in obedience of a two-fold kind—first, entire submission to the Divine disposal, so that his virtue is free from the touch of egoism, and secondly, the passion for active co-operation with the Divine will, the aspiration to drive back the bounds of darkness and widen the borders of the light.

Much of Milton's art is derived from, or connected with, effects of contrast. Darkness and light, heaven and hell, chaos and the ordered world, sphere within sphere, are set over one against the other. In character the central contrast is between the evil and the good, the loyal and the disobedient, the pure spirit and the impure. Milton was an idealist in his art, and an idealist has little perception of all those millimetric distinctions by which human character declines or ascends. His Hebraism fell in with his artistic tendency; men are either the chosen servants of God or are God's enemies; the world is not a gymnasium, as Hellenism conceived it, or, at least, as such a neo-Hellenist as Goethe imagined; it is not a gymnasium but a battle-field. The dialogue invented by such a Hebraic idealist is not true dramatic dialogue; each speaker occupies a fixed position; the one flings his spear of speech, which is caught upon the opponent's targe, and the other

hurls his spear of retort. There are no glancings aside, no by-issues, no light turns this way or that, no shifting of distances, no mixing of minds, as in veritable dialogue. It is not converse, but debate in which a theme or a thesis is discussed, and it might be called forensic or academic but for the passion with which the argument is aflame. It is often rather a duel than a debate. Milton's own monstrous duels with ecclesiastical and political opponents confirmed in him the habit of his mind; he does not always, or perhaps often, hope to convert an adversary; he flings a book at him, as the angels flung mountains, to crush him and overwhelm. But from the first his method was largely that of contrast, and his dialogue was in great part impassioned controversy. The votary of mirth is set over against the loftier votary of melancholy. The Elder Brother and the Second Brother in 'Comus' debate concerning Solitude, the risks to which Beauty is exposed and the hidden strength of Chastity. In 'Comus,' indeed, Milton, on the model of the Greek dramatists, plays a little at the game known as "les Graces," or, as it was named by the Greeks, "stichomythia." This is not the dialogue of Nature, but a pretty transposition of Nature into art. In the game of "les Graces" the two players stand at a fixed distance, and shoot from off the sticks the same hoop in like fashion until they are tired and their elbows begin to tingle. Milton could have played the game as well as another, but when he comes to business and quits play, his first great debate, his first prolonged duel, begins—that in which the Lady, with corporal rind immanacled,

parries and thrusts with a noble dexterity in spiritual quart and tierce in contention with the magnificent Enchanter.

In 'Paradise Lost' the rules of the duello are finely observed by those accomplished swordsmen, Satan and Gabriel, who meet by moonlight in the garden. Ithuriel with the touch of his spear has exploded that magazine of diabolic powder, which looked so like a toad. An angelic squadron, with ported spears, thick as wheat-ears in harvest, is presently at hand, and Satan has no second. But Gabriel behaves like a person of honour, and the terrible tongue-fence (to borrow from his prose a word of Milton's own) is strictly a duel. Scorn is met by disdain; appellant and remonstrant are in the lists, and dreadful deeds, the poet assures us—and his statement seems highly probable—might have ensued were it not that the supreme Monarch interposes and bids each combatant throw down his rival's gage. Lions make leopards tame. A still more illustrious example of the Miltonic duel is found at the close of the fifth book of 'Paradise Lost.' Here the position of vantage is reversed; the scene is the Mountain of the Congregation in the north province of Heaven, and it is Abdiel—that flame of indignant zeal—who is unsupported and alone,

> "Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified."

Never has Milton written with more concentration of pride and passion than in describing this solitary Ironside, fervent for the good old cause, in the camp of the false tyrant's cavaliers.

Milton's latest duels—for 'Paradise Regained' was probably written at a somewhat earlier date than 'Samson Agonistes'—were those of the blind and shackled champion of Israel; first with Fraud, sorceress, traitress, hyæna, bosom-snake, a manifest serpent, and all in Dalila; secondly with boisterous Force, the tongue-doughty giant, Harapha. Only a Miltonic husband would discharge such heavy broadsides of argument, obloquy and scorn against such a holiday ship of Tarsus as Dalila, with all her bravery on and tackle trim. It must be confessed that she stands the chain-shot and shells in admirable style, keeps her flag flying at the masthead, and sails away, bedecked and ornate to the end, having a woman's last word to the extent of between thirty and forty lines of blank verse. As she gets nearly out of range she delivers a parting shot in the neatest style, hitting the good ship Samson between the wind and water. It has been thought that Milton was not always complimentary to womankind; a man's wife is his "female," over whom he should wield despotic power "smile she or lour." But what finer compliment to woman's wit has been paid than the exit of Dalila in contrast with the stupid, blundering exit of that bulk of male truculence, his giantship Harapha, who in his thick-witted insolence finds nothing better to blurt out as he quits the scene than the threat:

> "By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
> These braveries in irons loaden on thee?"

Well might Dalila join with George Eliot's Denner in exclaiming, "I should'nt like to be a man

—to cough so loud, and stand straddling about on a wet day, and be so wasteful with meat and drink. They're a coarse lot I think"—giants especially, she might add in mitigation of the general sentence, and with some tender recollection of that curled darling, the paranymph.

The duels in the desert between the old swordsman, Satan, and the young paladin, whose warfare has but begun, are desperately serious affairs. The Prince of the Power of the Air has watched his adversary with suspicion and fear from the moment of birth. The testimony of Heaven to the divine sonship of Jesus at his baptism—though what this precisely means Satan is not yet aware—has struck him as with thunder. It is with looks aghast and sad that he addresses the gloomy consistory in the clouds. He recognises in Jesus the Woman's Seed who is to bruise the Serpent's head, but he does not know that the woman's seed in the First Begotten who had driven him from Heaven's battlements to the deep. There is something of the old majestic Satan in the self-control which, even when racked with inward anguish, he maintains almost to the last. For a moment after leaving that dark consistory we are amid the "full frequence bright of angels" (for Milton's imagination demanded the heightening effect of contrast); we hear the assurance of the Most High—a statement of fact, not a decree—as to the issue of the strife; we attend the angelic song of victory, while Seraphim and Cherubim encircle the throne in celestial measures. And then, straightway, we are among the rocks and shadows of the desert, permitted to overhear the inmost

thoughts of a young patriot and hero, aspiring, ardent, pure—thoughts which memories of Milton's Cambridge and Horton days may have helped him to fling higher than his own youthful heart had ever reached.

Satan's disguise as an aged peasant may have been suggested by the "aged sire" whose "holy weeds" covered a monstrous serpent, in Giles Fletcher's poem 'Christ's Victorie and Triumph,' as this was perhaps derived from the Archimago of the 'Faerie Queene.' The conception was indeed widespread and traditional in literature and art; Milton's imagination again demanded a contrast—that of inexperienced heroism, "Our Morning Star, then in his rise," and the gathered craft of forty centuries, the star Lucifer now clouded and drawing towards its fall. No one who has read 'Paradise Regained' can have failed to hear a melancholy grandeur in the voice of the great lost angel, when detected in his fraud—

> "'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate
> Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
> Kept not my happy station."

While it haunts our cells of hearing, they are haunted also by an echo from the close of Wordsworth's sonnet on the 'Extinction of the Venetian Republic'—

> "Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
> Of that which once was great is passed away."

Yet in that word "unfortunate" the sophist is apparent. In a later passage of the poem Jesus

censures the Greek philosophers for accusing God under the name of Fortune (iv, 316). It was not fortune, but insensate pride that cost Satan his happy station.

In the first temptation—"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread"—Milton makes his bow to Holy Scripture, which he reverenced profoundly, by closely following the sacred text; but, like a great artist, having proposed the theme he wants to play a magnificent variation on it which shall be all his own. The desert is to be transformed to a scene of enchantment like that in which Armida feasted her lovers. But before the poet runs over the keys with dazzling effect, he preludes with a pensive minor strain. Before we are shown the very romance of gastronomy heightened by all that can feast the eye and ear, we are led to a creek of Jordan, "where winds and osiers whispering play," and listen to plain fishermen in a low cottage questioning about the departed Master; we hear the heart-beats of Mary, troubled and yet assured, as she ponders the grounds of fear and grounds of hope—

"Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure."

There follows the second consistory in the clouds, where Belial, with eloquence, which has lost nothing by his long sojourn among the sons and daughters of men, makes proposals for the subdual of the virtue of Jesus—"Set women in his eye and in his walk"—such as might have come from some courtier, accomplished and admired, of the Restoration, while Satan rejects, with a touch of scorn for its fatuity,

the counsel of the fleshly incubus. The first temptation was an appeal to the miraculous power of Jesus to satisfy the cravings of his hunger. What if now the act of will, in which might lurk sin, as anticipating rather than waiting on Divine Providence, were dispensed with? What if all the boon gifts of earth and sea for man's sustenance were proffered to a man almost light-headed with his fast, one whose dreams were haunted by his desire for food? What if these were proffered with every enchanting accompaniment of art, of grace, of beauty —not by Satan, for Satanic gifts must be rejected, but by Nature, as tribute to the Lord of Nature? Such was the splendid variation superadded by Milton to the scriptural theme. Milton cannot have contrived this masque-like scene, which, indeed, has touches in it derived from the shows of Prospero in 'The Tempest,' without remembering his own masque presented at Ludlow Castle. But here is no Comus attended by his ugly-headed rabble. The demons who are at Satan's beck enter disguised as spirits of air and woods and springs,

> "Tall stripling youths rich-clad, of fairer hue
> Than Ganymed or Hylas,"

with solemn nymphs of Diana's train, naiades and ladies of the Hesperides more beautiful than any fairies beheld by Sir Lancelot or Sir Tristram in Arthurean romance. And Jesus stands unmoved; he simply waves the fraud aside with no more than one slight touch of scorn. Satan has proved hardly less fatuous than Belial.

Jesus has perceived that the offered gifts are not

those of Nature, but specious lures of the Evil One. All that was so fair vanishes with sound of harpies' wings and talons, and Satan will have no more to do with magic. He accepts and declares the fact that the whole heart of the young patriot is set on high designs, high actions. But how shall these high designs be compassed? The Tempter's hopes are now built on the possibility that, with his eye fixed upon noble ends, Jesus may overlook the legitimacy of the means. This, according to the interpretation of Wordsworth, was the sin of Dion:

> "Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
> Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

But for such a kingdom as Jesus desires riches are in fact not serviceable even as the means; Satan is twice deluded; the high designs of his opponent are not conceived aright, and the instruments by which these designs may be accomplished are equally misconceived. Not material empire but spiritual rule—to govern the inner man—is the Saviour's aim. And instantly Satan degrades this aspiration into a passion for human glory. Material empire, which had in his previous allurement been imagined as the end, now becomes the means, and the end itself is that last infirmity of noble mind—the spur that the clean spirit doth raise to scorn delights. But the thought of Milton's youth—

> "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,"

and—

> "As He pronounces lastly on each deed,
> Of so much fame in Heaven expect the meed,"

is the thought of Milton's elder years. The Saviour,

indeed, speaks of the applause of the people—"a herd confused," "a miscellaneous rabble"—with a harshness which is more in the spirit of an intellectual aristocrat like Milton, than in that of one whose sympathies were popular, who consorted with plain fishermen, who was not ashamed when the common people heard him gladly, and who may have felt the fragment of truth embodied in Shelley's words, which tell us that fame is love disguised. But the old thought of 'Lycidas' is again and nobly expressed:

> "This is true glory and renown, when God,
> Looking on earth, with approbation marks
> The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
> To all His angels."

The reply of Jesus is ample and detailed; in the Miltonic duel all the argumentative points of the antagonist have to be taken up and rebutted; the speaker is unperturbed and free from passion, however plain-spoken and severe, until some words of Satan, which border on profanity in their reference to the Almighty Father's requisition of glory, rouse him to a sacred fervour. Driven from one position to another, and on each new occasion seizing higher ground, Satan dares to appeal to the religious zeal of Jesus and his sense of duty. In his earliest youth victorious deeds, heroic acts, had flamed in the heart of the Saviour,

> "one while
> To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
> Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
> Brute violence and proud tyrannic power."

He is thirty, and nothing has been achieved; should

not zeal and duty make the occasion which they have not found?

> "Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
> Thy country from her heathen servitude?"

Milton himself had known in early days the promptings of a disinterested ambition; with him the Divine summons was to be a poet, and at twenty-three how little had been accomplished or attained! The sonnet written then tells us how Milton would not snatch occasion by the forelock, but, a day-labourer under the great Taskmaster's eye, would abide the will of Heaven. In writing this passage of 'Paradise Regained' he had not far to seek for the answer of Jesus to Satan's plea; he had but to consult his own consciousness —"All things are best fulfilled in their due time." Nor did Jesus look forward to life as to a Bacchic triumph in India, or a series of conquests like those of the son of Macedonian Philip—"Who best can suffer best can do."

Detected and foiled, Satan bears the Saviour to the specular mount, from which he shall behold the kingdoms of the world and their glory. The tempter regards it as a possibility that, while he dazzles the young man's eyes with regal pomp and power, he may entangle his understanding with the mysteries of Machiavellian policy. But Jesus not only sees the great vision of the cities of the east and the Parthian military power, he sees through it; this luggage of war is argument rather of human weakness than of strength. The bribe to his generosity, the promise of the recovery from servitude of the lost

tribes of Israel, is equally ineffectual. Milton, though untouched by political cynicism, had learnt, when his high hopes of the Commonwealth were shattered and the Restoration went its way, that degenerate men, enslaved by themselves, cannot be emancipated by any external force, that no liberator with the sword can "of inward slaves make outward free." Here, again, we can but wait upon God's time, when He—

"by some wondrous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere."

'The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a free Commonwealth' was Milton's last high political trumpet-call.

At this point Satan's intelligence assures him that he cannot prevail, but "to salve his credit and in very spite" he will renew the assault. The forlorn gambler has still a piece or two of gold to throw upon the table. Milton in his youth had seen Papal Rome, Queen of the Earth, and now his imagination expands as he pictures the magnificence and far-spreading sway of the imperial city. Once again the vain waves batter solid rock and end in froth or bubbles. It is in sheer impudence after defeat that Satan claims the homage of a vassal from his victor as the condition of his gift. And Jesus is at length moved to indignant disdain; the moment has not quite come for the authoritative disclosure of who and what indeed he is, but it cannot be far off, while Satan, on the other hand, is disclosed in his full infamy:

"Get thee behind me! Plain thou now appear'st
That Evil One, Satan for ever damn'd!"

The Tempter, at length abashed, offers an apology, which is, at least, half the truth. His purpose in these temptations had been twofold; first, to betray Jesus, if that were possible, as he had betrayed Eve, to sin; to which design he now makes no reference; and secondly, if Jesus proved impregnable, to ascertain the real nature and personality of this dangerous adversary. In the first consistory in the clouds Satan had spoken of this, his second object—

> "His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
> When his fierce thunder drove us to the Deep;
> Who this is we must learn, for Man he seems
> In all his lineaments, though in his face
> The glimpses of his Father's glory shine."

By his claim for feudal service from the Son of God, Satan had, at least, roused him to indignation, and secured a chance for the all-important discovery.

Out of the Tempter's defeat, however, springs a new hope. Jesus has rejected empire. He will have nothing to do with either Parthia or Rome. Inward freedom, the rule over his own spirit, is more to him than material sway. And out of the very inwardness of Jesus may not a new weapon of temptation be forged? He would learn all wisdom, and where should wisdom be found if not in the schools of Greece? He would govern others by persuasion, and where should the arts of persuasion be learnt if not from the Attic orators and poets? Satan would divert him, if possible, from the pure stream of Divine inspiration to the turbid waters of human speculation. The attempt

of Milton to surpass or even to equal his preceding descriptions of the East and of Rome with a vision of Greece was a daring enterprise, yet at no point has the enterprise failed. The chivalry of Ctesiphon, in rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings, wheeling and shooting as they fly their sleet of arrowy showers, the palaces of Rome, with turrets and terraces and glittering spires, the prætors and proconsuls on the highways, the strange, exotic embassies proceeding Romewards—

"Dusk faces with white silken turbants wreath'd—"

these have all passed from view, and in their place we behold the city on the Ægean shore, "built nobly, pure the air and light the soil"; we hear the bees murmuring upon Hymettus, the nightingale in the grove of Academe, or Ilyssus roll his whispering stream. Surprise after surprise of magnificence or of beauty greets us in this poem of the wilderness. In Greece, this land of wisdom and light and art, Jesus, as Satan makes his proposal, was to learn to be a philosopher-king, by learning first to maintain rule over himself.

The answer of Jesus is of peculiar interest as indicating the place which Milton assigned to Hellenistic culture. It is not to be supposed that he is here writing dramatically in the character of a young Jewish enthusiast. Deeply indebted as Milton was to Greek literature, the views here expressed were his own, and had been his own for many years. As sources of spiritual truth he assigned the highest places first to the inward promptings of the Divine spirit—for the friend of

young Ellwood, who suggested the subject of 'Paradise Regained,' approximated here to Ellwood's quaker faith; and secondly, to the written Word of God. Milton's scripturalism was as complete and thorough as that of Bunyan or any uncultured Puritan; but whereas texts of the Bible darted out upon Bunyan like fiery missives from a book of magic, Milton laboriously and studiously pieced texts together and so built up his singular body of Christian Doctrine. In the opening of that treatise, which was begun by Milton at a comparatively early age, he declares that this doctrine, so essential for right living, is to be obtained, "not from the schools of the philosophers, nor from the laws of man, but from the Holy Scriptures alone, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." But if we were to read no more than the treatise on Christian Doctrine, we might imagine that Milton approached the Scriptures merely as a painstaking and often heterodox scholastic of the age of Puritanism. The reply of Jesus to Satan, with other passages of Milton's writings, assure us that he differed from some of his fellow-scholastics in regarding the Bible, not merely as a storehouse of texts to be ransacked for the ascertainment or proof of a creed, but also as the literature of a nation. The Hebrew lyric song is song inspired by truth and more than a match for that of Greece; the Hebrew prophets, better and more nobly than the Greek orators, instruct us in all that concerns the highest life of a people.

With oracles of violence and strife and cruel death drawn from the horoscope of Jesus—a "starry

rubric"—the Fiend bears him back to the wilderness, and the terrors of that night of tempest follow. The high-wrought description—rain and fire commingling, winds from the four hinges of the world, oak and pine bending and rending in the blast—is a Miltonic contrast with the enchanting banquet-scene of an earlier book, and the Satanic mastery of the elements is demonstrated by both at the opposite extremes. But when the pilgrim Morning comes forth "in amice gray," the nerves of Jesus, though still he is fasting, are unshaken; he is no "worse than wet." The last temptation comes suddenly and as suddenly is ended. Satan, concealing his despairing hope that Jesus may be seduced to sin, declares boldly the other part of his design:

> "I collect
> Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
> Good reason then if I beforehand seek
> To understand my adversary, who
> And what he is."

Milton was capable, had he thought fit, of stretching out to a profound debate the final as he did the earlier temptations. The pinnacle of the temple might have been contrived as well as any height or hollow of the wilderness to serve as a place for discussion. But it is the old gambler's last throw; he is eager with mad despite for the issue. The crisis and culmination have arrived. The last bout of the duel is to be played, and the decisive thrust must be swift. It may be admitted, however, that the critics and commentators have raised a doubt as to the precise nature of that thrust. "It

is written tempt not the Lord thy God." Does Jesus mean that to throw himself from the pinnacle would be to tempt the Almighty, in whose disposal he stood? Such would seem the most natural sense of the words. Or can it be that at this tremendous moment a sense of his Divinity—for in the Miltonic theology the Saviour is Divine, and God, though inferior to his creator, the Father—comes upon Jesus, and by heavenly permission and prompting he declares to Satan that the man whom he sought to tempt is his Lord, the first-begotten Son who had overwhelmed the rebel crew? Assuredly Milton intends that, whether by the words of Jesus or by the miracle of his unfaltering stand on the pinnacle, where no human foot could remain poised, Satan at length should recognise his adversary and read his own doom:

> "But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell;"

and the fall is such that only by comparing small things with great can any parallel be found.

The amazing event is followed by infinite gentleness in the angelic ministry, and perfect refreshment for the long-tried champion of God. Nor does the heavenly chaunt which celebrates the victory of the queller of Satan close the poem. It must end, like 'Paradise Lost' and each of Milton's greater poems, with a soft dying fall, a word of calm and perfect appeasement:

> "He unobserved
> Home to his mother's house private return'd."

We are left to imagine, if we will, the sweet humanities of the home of Mary.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE AND THE STUDY OF MILTON.

BY SIR EDWARD BRABROOK, C.B.

When this series of lectures was first arranged, it was intended that I should have the honour of opening them with a few remarks on the association of the Royal Society of Literature with Milton; but my absence from England on the opening day prevented my doing so, and it was then arranged that my observations should be made at the close of the course. It is not surprising that a Society incorporated for the purposes of the advancement of literature, and of endeavouring to preserve the purity of the English language, should have devoted early and continuous attention to the works of so great a master of the English tongue in prose and in poetry, as John Milton; and that has been the case. Among the ten Royal Associates, elected in 1823, to each of whom a Royal Pension of 100 guineas was granted, was the Rev. Henry John Todd, F.S.A., afterwards Archdeacon of Cleveland, whose edition of Milton's works was described by Hallam as a monument of indefatigable diligence.

To Henry Hallam himself, the great historian of English literature, and therein of Milton, the

Society's gold medal was adjudged in 1830, and he was President of the Society from 1844 to 1849.

Meanwhile, in the year 1823, an important literary discovery had been made, which engaged much of the attention of the Society. In the State Paper Office, among documents deposited there either by Secretary Sir Joseph Williamson or Secretary Sir Leoline Jenkins, who held their offices from 1674 to 1684, was found a Latin manuscript, filling 735 pages of small quarto letter paper, entitled "Joannis Miltoni Angli de Doctrina Christiana, ex sacris duntaxat Libris petita (which we may translate as 'sought out of the Sacred Books alone') Disquisitionum libri duo posthumi." It was suggested that this manuscript had come to the Secretary of State as part of a result of the search and seizure of papers in the possession of Cyriac Skinner. So important was the discovery considered that it was brought under the attention of the Royal Patron of this Society, King George the Fourth, and he gave orders that a translation of the manuscript should be prepared and published. He selected for this work a Fellow of our Society, who was Chaplain-in-Ordinary, Deputy Clerk of the Closet, and Librarian to His Majesty, the Rev. Charles Richard Sumner, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, whose brother afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury. As to the manner in which he accomplished the work, we may take the testimony of Macaulay. "Mr. Sumner, who was commanded by His Majesty to edit and translate the treatise, has acquitted himself of his task in a manner honourable to his talents and his character. His version, indeed, is not very

easy or elegant, but it is entitled to the praise of clearness and fidelity. His notes abound with interesting quotations, and have the rare merit of really elucidating the text. The preface is evidently the work of a sensible and of a candid man, firm in his own religious opinions, and tolerant towards those of others." The book appeared in two quarto volumes, one containing the Latin text, the other the preface, translation, and notes.

At the first General Anniversary Meeting of our Society after the grant of its charter, held on 27th April, 1826, the Right Rev. Thomas Burgess, Bishop of St. David's, our founder and first President, whose connection with the Society is commemorated by the statuette before us, enlarged in his Presidential Address upon the authenticity of this Treatise, which had been, in his Lordship's opinion, erroneously imputed to Milton. At the next Annual General Meeting, on 26th April, 1827, Bishop Burgess referred to the discovery at His Majesty's State Paper Office of some additional Latin State letters of Milton, and continued his inquiry into the authenticity of the treatise on Christian doctrine, expressing the opinion that, whilst this Society is bound to promote every authentic literary discovery, it ought not, without the most satisfactory evidence, derived from a scrupulous examination, to sanction the ascribing of any manuscripts to those great writers who have impressed a character upon the literature of their age and country. His Lordship then stated some further arguments in evidence of the foreign origin of the work. Again, at the next year's meeting, on 24th April, 1828, he commented,

at considerable length, upon the additional evidence likely to be thrown upon the question by the labours of Mr. Robert Lemon, Junior. Mr. Lemon's investigations appear to have led him to the conclusion that the first fifteen chapters of the first book were in the handwriting of Mary, Milton's second daughter, and that the remainder is that of Edward Phillips, his nephew.* The work is divided into two books—the first relating to the knowledge, and the second to the service, of God. Dr. Rosedale, in his excellent lecture delivered before this Society on the 6th January, 1909, has ably discussed the work, and attributed it to the time between 1643 and 1645. The original editor had assumed that it was written after Milton's retirement from public life in 1655. The expression "*libri duo posthumi*" in the written title would seem to indicate that the manuscript was a transcript made after Milton's death of one written or dictated by him. At any rate, we may now agree with Dr. Rosedale as to its being an authentic work of John Milton, notwithstanding the arguments of Bishop Burgess.

In 1855, the Society appointed the Rev. Henry Christmas to be its Professor of English Archæology and History, and in two courses of lectures delivered before crowded audiences during his tenure of that office, he discoursed on the mythology of angels, as shown in 'Paradise Lost,' and drew a distinction between really popular superstition and the poetic myth developed out of Milton's imagination; and

* These handwritings correspond with some of the hands in which the Commonplace book is written.

he referred to Milton's career in connection with the Commonwealth, emphasising the conservative element in that change, showing that it involved no revolutionary alteration in the essentials of the general laws of the country.

At the Society's Anniversary Meeting on 26th April, 1876, after the death of its distinguished President, Connop Thirlwall, Bishop of St. David's, the Council reported to the Society the discovery by Mr. Alfred J. Horwood, Barrister-at-Law of the Inner Temple, among the papers of Sir Frederick Graham, Bart., at Netherby, of the original commonplace book of John Milton; and informed the Fellows that it would be published in photographic facsimile by the autotype permanent process, under the direction of this Society. Mr. Horwood gave an account of the discovery at an evening meeting of the Society, but as that account does not appear in the Society's 'Transactions,' I may be permitted to quote at some length from the Address of the Council for the year 1876, as there are probably not more than a dozen Fellows now existing in the Society to whom that address was delivered. Mr. Horwood was engaged at Netherby looking over papers for the Historical Manuscripts Commission, when he found inside a MS volume a loose letter addressed to John Milton by Henry Lawes, a musician who had set to music Milton's 'Comus.' This induced him to further investigate the contents of the volume, and to compare the handwriting with the known specimens of Milton's handwriting at Trinity College, Cambridge, contained in J. L. Sotheby's 'Ramblings in the Elucidation of the

Autograph of Milton' (4to., Lond., 1861). He arrived at the conclusion that a considerable part of the writing was that of John Milton himself; and that the handwriting gradually changed and grew larger and more distinct, probably for the reason that as the poet grew older, his eyesight grew weaker, and he found it necessary to enlarge the style so as to be more easily able to read his extracts.

Some entries in the book have been identified as in the handwriting of Daniel Skinner, who carried with him to Holland a number of Milton's papers, after Milton's death. The book must have shortly after that time come into the possession of Sir Richard Graham, Viscount Preston, as he used it for the same purpose, and died in 1694. It is observed that the entries in Lord Preston's handwriting are of an exactly opposite tendency to those of Milton, which are of a republican character. There are also entries by other persons, which are assumed to be those of amanuenses employed by Milton when his failing eyesight prevented his writing in the book himself.

The facsimile was in due course published by the Society, and a copy is in our Library. The text of the manuscript has also been published by the Camden Society. Dr. Rosedale, in his recent lecture, quoted several passages from it. The arrangement of the book is this:—At page 1 is a heading "Index Ethicus," with 32 subdivisions, such as "Gula," "Libido," "Castitas," "de Musicâ," etc., to each of which a separate page or pages had been allotted, and each page filled more or less with extracts from the authors whose works were read

and consulted. At page 101 of the MS is an "Index Economicus," with twelve subdivisions, such as "Matrimonium," "De Servis," "Paupertas," and "Eleemosynæ." At page 177 is an "Index Politicus," with 36 subdivisions, such as "Respublica," "Subditus," "Servitus," "Extortio," etc. The subject of "King" occupies four pages; "Tyrant" and "Monarchy" three each; "Matrimony," "Divorce," "Laws," and "Liberty" two each. The authors quoted number about 100, including St. Augustine, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, and other Fathers of the Church; Athenæus, Cæsar, Justinian, Lucan, and other classical writers; Ariosto, Berni, Boccaccio, Gower, and other mediæval poets and literary writers; Ascham, Bacon, Bodinus, Philip de Comines, and other historians and lawgivers. The most numerous quotations are from Socrates, Eusebius, Chaucer, Sleidan, Dante, Camden, Holinshed, William of Malmesbury, Paolo Sarpi, Speed, Stow, and De Thou. These names afford some indication of the current of literary feeling in Milton's period.

The following are a few specimen entries:

De Scientia Literarum.

The noble king Alfred, a great lover of learning: Malmesbury, Sto., p. 8. His excellent statute for training up all the English till 15 years old in learning; see Speed in his life.

Two Englishmen, Alcuin and John, by appointment of Charles the Great, founded the two chiefest and ancientist universities of Europe—Paris and Pavia. Girard. Hist. France, l. 4, pp. 218, 219.

That princes ought to be learned, Comines well shows, Memoires, l. 2, c. 6.

Respublica.

The following entry has no references, and may, therefore, possibly be an expression of Milton's own reflections upon the subject:

"The form of State to be fitted to the people's disposition: some live best under monarchy, some otherwise: so that the conversions of commonwealths happen not always through ambition or malice: as among the Romans who after their (thire in orig.) infancy were ripe for a more free government than monarchy, being in a manner all fit to be kings: afterward grown unruly and impotent with over much prosperity, were either for their profit or their punishment fit to be curbed with a lordly and dreadful monarchy: which was the error of the noble Brutus and Cassius, who felt themselves of spirit to free a nation, but considered not that the nation was not fit to be free, whilst forgetting their old justice and fortitude which was made to rule, they became slaves to their own ambition and luxury."

Rex.

Concerning the duty and office of an English king, how to govern, read the dying counsel of Henry 4th to his son. Sto.

Mores Gentium.

A dangerous thing and an ominous thing, to imitate with earnestness the fashions of neighbour nations; so the English ran madding after the French in Edward Confessor's time. Sto., p. 94. Speed. God turn the omen from these days.

Under the heads of "Marriage" and "Divorce" Milton made many notes, directed to those subjects,

no doubt, by his own domestic troubles. It would seem that in this he shared the lot of many men of genius, who somehow fail in those arts which are necessary to cherish the ardour of domestic affection. His quotations on this subject are derived from Cedrenus, Ignatius, Clemens Alexandrinus, Henry of Huntingdon, and a host of other authorities.

And now, in this tercentenary year, our Society has commemorated Milton by the lectures to which you have listened, in which his knowledge of music, his grand style, and his religious conceptions, have been discussed; and your attention has been drawn not only to his immortal epic, in comparison with that of Dante, and in both its parts, 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained,' but to his shorter poems, and to his great prose work 'The Areopagitica.' I may venture to say, on behalf of the Council, and also on behalf of the audiences who have assembled to hear these lectures, that we are greatly indebted to Mr. Hadow, Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, Dr. Axon, Mr. Pember, Professor Dowden, Professor Saintsbury, and Dr. Rosedale for the instruction they have given us. The volume of these lectures, shortly to be issued, will record a material advance in our knowledge of Milton, his character, his life, and his works, due to the learning and insight of our accomplished lecturers.

I may thus claim for the Royal Society of Literature that each successive generation of its Fellows, from the very beginning of its existence, has devoted itself as a primary duty to the study of that English writer who surpassed all other poets in loftiness of thought and in majesty, so that "the force of nature could no farther go."

MILTON IN HUNGARY.

NOTES BY PROFESSOR ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY, HON.F.R.S.L.

The great name of Milton made its first entrance into Hungary during the second half of the 18th century, the period of the Renaissance of Hungarian literature. It was George Bessenyei, the life-guardsman, who headed that revival of learning, who mentions the name of Milton among the great poets.

Some years later the first Hungarian edition of Milton appeared, made from an abbreviated translation from the pen of David Szabò (Baròti). This work contained six hexameter poems, and gave rise to a considerable literary controversy known as the "Paradise controversy," in which not only the translator David Szabò, but even Milton himself was attacked.

The Jesuit Rajnis, declared in a controversial treatise that whilst in Milton there was much that was beautiful and worthy of praise, yet notwithstanding, his work was spoiled by enormous mistakes.

Upon this the young poet Bacsányi took up the cudgels on behalf of the English Poet, and asserted that Milton was one of the greatest poets who ever charmed and blessed humanity with their poetry. (*Vide* Magyar Museum, 1788–1789.)

During the same period the Rev. J. Péczely (the Komàrom reform preacher) wrote the first Hungarian poem in praise of Milton. In it he says:

"Sublime Milton! In thy work we see a new Fountain of Hippocrene which has sprung up in the North."

Alexander Bessenyei, formerly a life-guardsman, and elder brother of the above-mentioned George Bessenyei, produced the first unabridged translation of Milton; he also translated Milton into Hungarian Prose, not from the Original however, but from a French Translation. Both of these works were published at Kassa (Kashau) in 1796, and contained 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained.'

While Szabò's translation is somewhat "drawn out," that of Bessenyei's is rather "dull."

Milton's poetry had considerable influence upon the first Classical Hungarian poet, Michael Vörösmarty, who wrote between 1800 and 1855.

Hungary now possesses a full translation of 'Paradise Lost,' made in true poetic style from the original, by Gustav Jànosi in 1890.

Milton is besides, the Hero of a tragedy written by the celebrated Novelist, Maurus Jókai in 1877. The plot is only partially based on historic facts and the greater portion is the pure invention of an imaginative mind. The author makes Milton die with these beautiful words on his lips:

"I am not blind! I see again the Eden of my dreams!
Thou long-lost Paradise, I find thee once again."

The celebrated picture of Milton dictating his masterpiece to his daughters, is from the brush of the greatest Hungarian Painter, Michael Munkàcsy.

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